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THE BORGIAS
THE CENCI

VOLUME I

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NOTE

DUMAS'S *Celebrated Crimes* was not written for children. The novelist has spared no language—has minced no words—to describe the violent scenes of a violent time.

In some instances facts appear distorted out of their true perspective, and in others the author makes unwarranted charges. It is not within our province to edit the historical side of Dumas, any more than it would be to correct the obvious errors in Dickens's *Child's History of England.* The careful, mature reader, for whom the books are intended, will recognize, and allow for, this fact.

INTRODUCTION

THE contents of these volumes of *Celebrated Crimes,* as well as the motives which led to their inception, are unique. They are a series of stories based upon historical records, from the pen of Alexandre Dumas, *père,* when he was not "the elder," nor yet the author of D'Artagnan or Monte Cristo, but was a rising young dramatist and a lion in the literary set and world of fashion.

Dumas, in fact, wrote his *Crimes Célèbres* just prior to launching upon his wonderful series of historical novels, and they may therefore be considered as source books, whence he was to draw so much of that far-reaching and intimate knowledge of inner history which has perennially astonished his readers. The *Crimes* were published in Paris, in 1839-40, in eight volumes, comprising eighteen titles—all of which now appear in the present carefully translated text. The success of the original work was instantaneous. Dumas laughingly said that he thought he had exhausted the subject of famous crimes, until the work was off the press, when he immediately became deluged with letters

from every province in France, supplying him with material upon other deeds of violence! The subjects which he has chosen, however, are of both historic and dramatic importance, and they have the added value of giving the modern reader a clear picture of the state of semi-lawlessness which existed in Europe, during the middle ages. "The Borgias, the Cenci, Urbain Grandier, the Marchioness of Brinvilliers, the Marchioness of Ganges, and the rest—what subjects for the pen of Dumas!" exclaims Garnett.

Space does not permit us to consider in detail the material here collected, although each title will be found to present points of special interest. The first volume comprises the annals of the Borgias and the Cenci. The name of the noted and notorious Florentine family has become a synonym for intrigue and violence, and yet the Borgias have not been without stanch defenders in history.

Another famous Italian story is that of the Cenci. The beautiful Beatrice Cenci—celebrated in the painting of Guido, the sixteenth century romance of Guerrazi, and the poetic tragedy of Shelley, not to mention numerous succeeding works inspired by her hapless fate—will always remain a shadowy figure and one of infinite pathos.

The second volume chronicles the sanguinary deeds in the south of France, carried on in the name

of religion, but drenching in blood the fair country round about Avignon, for a long period of years.

The third volume is devoted to the story of Mary Queen of Scots, another woman who suffered a violent death, and around whose name an endless controversy has waged. Dumas goes carefully into the dubious episodes of her stormy career, but does not allow these to blind his sympathy for her fate. Mary, it should be remembered, was closely allied to France by education and marriage, and the French never forgave Elizabeth the part she played in the tragedy.

The fourth volume comprises three widely dissimilar tales. One of the strangest stories is that of Urbain Grandier, the innocent victim of a cunning and relentless religious plot. His story was dramatised by Dumas, in 1850. A famous German crime is that of Karl-Ludwig Sand, whose murder of Kotzebue, Councillor of the Russian Legation, caused an international upheaval which was not to subside for many years.

An especially interesting volume is number six, containing, among other material, the famous "Man in the Iron Mask." This unsolved puzzle of history was later incorporated by Dumas in one of the D'Artagnan Romances—a section of the *Vicomte de Bragelonne,* to which it gave its name. But in this later form, the true story of this sin-

gular man doomed to wear an iron vizor over his features during his entire lifetime could only be treated episodically. While as a special subject in the *Crimes,* Dumas indulges his curiosity, and that of his reader, to the full. Hugo's unfinished tragedy, *Les Jumeaux,* is on the same subject; as also are others by Fournier, in French, and Zschokke, in German.

Other stories can be given only passing mention. The beautiful poisoner, Marquise de Brinvilliers, must have suggested to Dumas his later portrait of Miladi, in the *Three Musketeers,* the most celebrated of his woman characters. The incredible cruelties of Ali Pacha, the Turkish despot, should not be charged entirely to Dumas, as he is said to have been largely aided in this by one of his "ghosts," Mallefille.

"Not a mere artist"—writes M. de Villemessant, founder of the *Figaro,*—"he has nevertheless been able to seize on those dramatic effects which have so much distinguished his theatrical career, and to give those sharp and distinct reproductions of character which alone can present to the reader the mind and spirit of an age. Not a mere historian, he has nevertheless carefully consulted the original sources of information, has weighed testimonies, elicited theories, and . . . has interpolated the poetry of history with its most thorough prose."

THE BORGIAS

PROLOGUE

ON the 8th of April, 1492, in a bedroom of the Carneggi Palace, about three miles from Florence, were three men grouped about a bed whereon a fourth lay dying.

The first of these three men, sitting at the foot of the bed, and half hidden, that he might conceal his tears, in the gold-brocaded curtains, was Ermolao Barbaro, author of the treatise *On Celibacy*, and of *Studies in Pliny*: the year before, when he was at Rome in the capacity of ambassador of the Florentine Republic, he had been appointed Patriarch of Aquileia by Innocent VIII.

The second, who was kneeling and holding one hand of the dying man between his own, was Angelo Poliziano, the Catullus of the fifteenth century, a classic of the lighter sort, who in his Latin verses might have been mistaken for a poet of the Augustan age.

The third, who was standing up and leaning against one of the twisted columns of the bed-head, following with profound sadness the progress of the malady which he read in the face of his departing friend, was the famous Pico della Mirandola, who

at the age of twenty could speak twenty-two languages, and who had offered to reply in each of these languages to any seven hundred questions that might be put to him by the twenty most learned men in the whole world, if they could be assembled at Florence.

The man on the bed was Lorenzo the Magnificent, who at the beginning of the year had been attacked by a severe and deep-seated fever, to which was added the gout, a hereditary ailment in his family. He had found at last that the draughts containing dissolved pearls which the quack doctor, Leoni di Spoleto, prescribed for him (as if he desired to adapt his remedies rather to the riches of his patient than to his necessities) were useless and unavailing, and so he had come to understand that he must part from those gentle-tongued women of his, those sweet-voiced poets, his palaces and their rich hangings; therefore he had summoned to give him absolution for his sins—in a man of less high place they might perhaps have been called crimes—the Dominican, Girolamo Francesco Savonarola.

It was not, however, without an inward fear, against which the praises of his friends availed nothing, that the pleasure-seeker and usurper awaited that severe and gloomy preacher by whose words all Florence was stirred, and on whose pardon henceforth depended all his hope for another world.

Indeed, Savonarola was one of those men of stone, coming, like the statue of the *Commandante,* to knock at the door of a Don Giovanni, and in the midst of feast and orgy to announce that it is even now the moment to begin to think of Heaven. He had been born at Ferrara, whither his family, one of the most illustrious of Padua, had been called by Niccolo, Marchese d'Este, and at the age of twenty-three, summoned by an irresistible vocation, had fled from his father's house, and had taken the vows in the cloister of Dominican monks at Florence. There, where he was appointed by his superiors to give lessons in philosophy, the young novice had from the first to battle against the defects of a voice that was both harsh and weak, a defective pronunciation, and above all, the depression of his physical powers, exhausted as they were by too severe abstinence.

Savonarola from that time condemned himself to the most absolute seclusion, and disappeared in the depths of his convent, as if the slab of his tomb had already fallen over him. There, kneeling on the flags, praying unceasingly before a wooden crucifix, fevered by vigils and penances, he soon passed out of contemplation into ecstasy, and began to feel in himself that inward prophetic impulse which summoned him to preach the reformation of the Church.

Nevertheless, the reformation of Savonarola, more

reverential than Luther's, which followed about five-and-twenty years later, respected the thing while attacking the man, and had as its aim the altering of teaching that was human, not faith that was of God. He did not work, like the German monk, by reasoning, but by enthusiasm. With him logic always gave way before inspiration: he was not a theologian, but a prophet. Yet, although hitherto he had bowed his head before the authority of the Church, he had already raised it against the temporal power. To him religion and liberty appeared as two virgins equally sacred; so that, in his view, Lorenzo in subjugating the one was as culpable as Pope Innocent VIII in dishonouring the other. The result of this was that, so long as Lorenzo lived in riches, happiness, and magnificence, Savonarola had never been willing, whatever entreaties were made, to sanction by his presence a power which he considered illegitimate. But Lorenzo on his deathbed sent for him, and that was another matter. The austere preacher set forth at once, bareheaded and barefoot, hoping to save not only the soul of the dying man but also the liberty of the republic.

Lorenzo, as we have said, was awaiting the arrival of Savonarola with an impatience mixed with uneasiness; so that, when he heard the sound of his steps, his pale face took a yet more deathlike tinge, while at the same time he raised himself on his

elbow and ordered his three friends to go away. They obeyed at once, and scarcely had they left by one door than the curtain of the other was raised, and the monk, pale, immovable, solemn, appeared on the threshold. When he perceived him, Lorenzo dei Medici, reading in his marble brow the inflexibility of a statue, fell back on his bed, breathing a sigh so profound that one might have supposed it was his last.

The monk glanced round the room as though to assure himself that he was really alone with the dying man; then he advanced with a slow and solemn step towards the bed. Lorenzo watched his approach with terror; then, when he was close beside him, he cried—

"O my father, I have been a very great sinner!"

"The mercy of God is infinite," replied the monk; "and I come into your presence laden with the divine mercy."

"You believe, then, that God will forgive my sins?" cried the dying man, renewing his hope as he heard from the lips of the monk such unexpected words.

"Your sins and also your crimes, God will forgive them all," replied Savonarola. "God will forgive your vanities, your adulterous pleasures, your obscene festivals; so much for your sins. God will forgive you for promising two thousand florins reward to the man who should bring you the head of

Dietisalvi, Nerone Nigi, Angelo Antinori, Niccolo Soderini, and twice the money if they were handed over alive; God will forgive you for dooming to the scaffold or the gibbet the son of Papi Orlandi, Francesco di Brisighella, Bernardo Nardi, Jacopo Frescobaldi, Amoretto Baldovinetti, Pietro Balducci, Bernardo di Bandino, Francesco Frescobaldi, and more than three hundred others whose names were none the less dear to Florence because they were less renowned; so much for your crimes." And at each of these names which Savonarola pronounced slowly, his eyes fixed on the dying man, he replied with a groan which proved the monk's memory to be only too true. Then at last, when he had finished, Lorenzo asked in a doubtful tone—

"Then do you believe, my father, that God will forgive me everything, both my sins and my crimes?"

"Everything," said Savonarola, "but on three conditions."

"What are they?" asked the dying man.

"The first," said Savonarola, "is that you feel a complete faith in the power and the mercy of God."

"My father," replied Lorenzo eagerly, "I feel this faith in the very depths of my heart."

"The second," said Savonarola, "is that you give back the property of others which you have unjustly confiscated and kept."

"My father, shall I have time?" asked the dying man.

"God will give it to you," replied the monk.

Lorenzo shut his eyes, as though to reflect more at his ease; then, after a moment's silence, he replied—

"Yes, my father, I will do it."

"The third," resumed Savonarola, "is that you restore to the republic her ancient independence and her former liberty."

Lorenzo sat up on his bed, shaken by a convulsive movement, and questioned with his eyes the eyes of the Dominican, as though he would find out if he had deceived himself and not heard aright. Savonarola repeated the same words.

"Never! never!" exclaimed Lorenzo, falling back on his bed and shaking his head,—"never!"

The monk, without replying a single word, made a step to withdraw.

"My father, my father," said the dying man, "do not leave me thus: have pity on me!"

"Have pity on Florence," said the monk.

"But, my father," cried Lorenzo, "Florence is free, Florence is happy."

"Florence is a slave, Florence is poor," cried Savonarola, "poor in genius, poor in money, and poor in courage; poor in genius, because after you, Lorenzo, will come your son Piero; poor in money, because from the funds of the republic you have

kept up the magnificence of your family and the credit of your business houses; poor in courage, because you have robbed the rightful magistrates of the authority which was constitutionally theirs, and diverted the citizens from the double path of military and civil life, wherein, before they were enervated by your luxuries, they had displayed the virtues of the ancients; and therefore, when the day shall dawn which is not far distant," continued the monk, his eyes fixed and glowing as if he were reading in the future, "whereon the barbarians shall descend from the mountains, the walls of our towns, like those of Jericho, shall fall at the blast of their trumpets."

"And do you desire that I should yield up on my deathbed the power that has made the glory of my whole life?" cried Lorenzo dei Medici.

"It is not I who desire it; it is the Lord," replied Savonarola coldly.

"Impossible, impossible!" murmured Lorenzo.

"Very well; then die as you have lived!" cried the monk, "in the midst of your courtiers and flatterers; let them ruin your soul as they have ruined your body!" And at these words, the austere Dominican, without listening to the cries of the dying man, left the room as he had entered it, with face and step unaltered; far above human things he seemed to soar, a spirit already detached from the earth.

At the cry which broke from Lorenzo dei Medici

when he saw him disappear, Ermolao, Poliziano, and Pico della Mirandola, who had heard all, returned into the room, and found their friend convulsively clutching in his arms a magnificent crucifix which he had just taken down from the bed-head. In vain did they try to reassure him with friendly words. Lorenzo the Magnificent only replied with sobs; and one hour after the scene which we have just related, his lips clinging to the feet of the Christ, he breathed his last in the arms of these three men, of whom the most fortunate—though all three were young—was not destined to survive him more than two years. "Since his death was to bring about many calamities," says Niccolo Macchiavelli, "it was the will of Heaven to show this by omens only too certain: the dome of the church of Santa Reparata was struck by lightning, and Roderigo Borgia was elected pope.

CHAPTER I

TOWARDS the end of the fifteenth century —that is to say, at the epoch when our history opens—the Piazza of St. Peter's at Rome was far from presenting so noble an aspect as that which is offered in our own day to anyone who approaches it by the Piazza dei Rusticucci.

In fact, the Basilica of Constantine existed no longer, while that of Michael Angelo, the masterpiece of thirty popes, which cost the labour of three centuries and the expense of two hundred and sixty millions, existed not yet. The ancient edifice, which had lasted for eleven hundred and forty-five years, had been threatening to fall in about 1440, and Nicholas V, artistic forerunner of Julius II and Leo X, had had it pulled down, together with the temple of Probus Anicius which adjoined it. In their place he had had the foundations of a new temple laid by the architects Rossellini and Battista Alberti; but some years later, after the death of Nicholas V, Paul II, the Venetian, had not been able to give more than five thousand crowns to continue the project of his predecessor, and thus the building was

arrested when it had scarcely risen above the ground, and presented the appearance of a still-born edifice, even sadder than that of a ruin.

As to the piazza itself, it had not yet, as the reader will understand from the foregoing explanation, either the fine colonnade of Bernini, or the dancing fountains, or that Egyptian obelisk which, according to Pliny, was set up by the Pharaoh at Heliopolis, and transferred to Rome by Caligula, who set it up in Nero's Circus, where it remained till 1586. Now, as Nero's Circus was situated on the very ground where St. Peter's now stands, and the base of this obelisk covered the actual site where the vestry now is, it looked like a gigantic needle shooting up from the middle of truncated columns, walls of unequal height, and half-carved stones.

On the right of this building, a ruin from its cradle, arose the Vatican, a splendid Tower of Babel, to which all the celebrated architects of the Roman school contributed their work for a thousand years: at this epoch the two magnificent chapels did not exist, nor the twelve great halls, the two-and-twenty courts, the thirty staircases, and the two thousand bedchambers; for Pope Sixtus v, the sublime swine-herd, who did so many things in a five years' reign, had not yet been able to add the immense building which on the eastern side towers above the court of St. Damasius; still, it was truly the old sacred edifice,

with its venerable associations, in which Charlemagne received hospitality when he was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III.

All the same, on the 9th of August, 1492, the whole of Rome, from the People's Gate to the Coliseum and from the Baths of Diocletian to the castle of Sant' Angelo, seemed to have made an appointment on this piazza: the multitude thronging it was so great as to overflow into all the neighbouring streets, which started from this centre like the rays of a star. The crowds of people, looking like a motley moving carpet, were climbing up into the basilica, grouping themselves upon the stones, hanging on the columns, standing up against the walls; they entered by the doors of houses and reappeared at the windows, so numerous and so densely packed that one might have said each window was walled up with heads. Now all this multitude had its eyes fixed on one single point in the Vatican; for in the Vatican was the Conclave, and as Innocent VIII had been dead for sixteen days, the Conclave was in the act of electing a pope.

Rome is the town of elections: since her foundation down to our own day—that is to say, in the course of nearly twenty-six centuries—she has constantly elected her kings, consuls, tribunes, emperors, and popes: thus Rome during the days of Conclave appears to be attacked by a strange fever which drives

everyone to the Vatican or to Monte Cavallo, according as the scarlet-robed assembly is held in one or the other of these two palaces: it is, in fact, because the raising up of a new pontiff is a great event for everybody; for, according to the average established in the period between St. Peter and Gregory XVI, every pope lasts about eight years, and these eight years, according to the character of the man who is elected, are a period either of tranquillity or of disorder, of justice or of venality, of peace or of war.

Never perhaps since the day when the first successor of St. Peter took his seat on the pontifical throne until the interregnum which now occurred, had so great an agitation been shown as there was at this moment, when, as we have shown, all these people were thronging on the Piazza of St. Peter and in the streets which led to it. It is true-that this was not without reason; for Innocent VIII—who was called the father of his people because he had added to his subjects eight sons and the same number of daughters—had, as we have said, after living a life of self-indulgence, just died, after a death-struggle during which, if the journal of Stefano Infessura may be believed, two hundred and twenty murders were committed in the streets of Rome. The authority had then devolved in the customary way upon the Cardinal Camerlengo, who during the interregnum had sovereign powers; but as he had been

obliged to fulfil all the duties of his office—that is, to get money coined in his name and bearing his arms, to take the fisherman's ring from the finger of the dead pope, to dress, shave and paint him, to have the corpse embalmed, to lower the coffin after nine days' obsequies into the provisional niche where the last deceased pope has to remain until his successor comes to take his place and consign him to his final tomb; lastly, as he had been obliged to wall up the door of the Conclave and the window of the balcony from which the pontifical election is proclaimed, he had not had a single moment for busying himself with the police; so that the assassinations had continued in goodly fashion, and there were loud cries for an energetic hand which should make all these swords and all these daggers retire into their sheaths.

Now the eyes of this multitude were fixed, as we have said, upon the Vatican, and particularly upon one chimney, from which would come the first signal, when suddenly, at the moment of the *Ave Maria*—that is to say, at the hour when the day begins to decline—great cries went up from all the crowd mixed with bursts of laughter, a discordant murmur of threats and raillery, the cause being that they had just perceived at the top of the chimney a thin smoke, which seemed like a light cloud to go up perpendicularly into the sky. This smoke announced

that Rome was still without a master, and that the world still had no pope; for this was the smoke of the voting tickets which were being burned, a proof that the cardinals had not yet come to an agreement.

Scarcely had this smoke appeared, to vanish almost immediately, when all the innumerable crowd, knowing well that there was nothing else to wait for, and that all was said and done until ten o'clock the next morning, the time when the cardinals had their first voting, went off in a tumult of noisy joking, just as they would after the last rocket of a firework display; so that at the end of one minute nobody was there where a quarter of an hour before there had been an excited crowd, except a few curious laggards, who, living in the neighbourhood or on the very piazza itself, were less in a hurry than the rest to get back to their homes; again, little by little, these last groups insensibly diminished; for half-past nine had just struck, and at this hour the streets of Rome began already to be far from safe; then after these groups followed some solitary passer-by, hurrying his steps; one after another the doors were closed, one after another the windows were darkened; at last, when ten o'clock struck, with the single exception of one window in the Vatican where a lamp might be seen keeping obstinate vigil, all the houses, piazzas, and streets were plunged in the deepest obscurity.

At this moment a man wrapped in a cloak stood up like a ghost against one of the columns of the uncompleted basilica, and gliding slowly and carefully among the stones which were lying about round the foundations of the new church, advanced as far as the fountain which formed the centre of the piazza, erected in the very place where the obelisk is now set up of which we have spoken already; when he reached this spot he stopped, doubly concealed by the darkness of the night and by the shade of the monument, and after looking around him to see if he were really alone, drew his sword, and with its point rapping three times on the pavement of the piazza, each time made the sparks fly. This signal, for signal it was, was not lost: the last lamp which still kept vigil in the Vatican went out, and at the same instant an object thrown out of the window fell a few paces off from the young man in the cloak: he, guided by the silvery sound it had made in touching the flags, lost no time in laying his hands upon it in spite of the darkness, and when he had it in his possession hurried quickly away.

Thus the unknown walked without turning round half-way along the Borgo Vecchio; but there he turned to the right and took a street at the other end of which was set up a Madonna with a lamp: he approached the light, and drew from his pocket

the object he had picked up, which was nothing else than a Roman crown piece; but this crown unscrewed, and in a cavity hollowed in its thickness enclosed a letter, which the man to whom it was addressed began to read at the risk of being recognised, so great was his haste to know what it contained.

We say at the risk of being recognised, for in his eagerness the recipient of this nocturnal missive had thrown back the hood of his cloak, and as his head was wholly within the luminous circle cast by the lamp, it was easy to distinguish in the light the head of a handsome young man of about five or six and twenty, dressed in a purple doublet slashed at the shoulder and elbow to let the shirt come through, and wearing on his head a cap of the same colour with a long black feather falling to his shoulder. It is true that he did not stand there long; for scarcely had he finished the letter, or rather the note, which he had just received in so strange and mysterious a manner, when he replaced it in its silver receptacle, and readjusting his cloak so as to hide all the lower part of his face, resumed his walk with a rapid step, crossed Borgo San Spirito, and took the street of the Longara, which he followed as far as the church of Regina Cœli. When he arrived at this place, he gave three rapid knocks on the door of a house of good appearance,

which immediately opened; then slowly mounting the stairs he entered a room where two women were awaiting him with an impatience so unconcealed that both as they saw him exclaimed together—

"Well, Francesco, what news?"

"Good news, my mother; good, my sister," replied the young man, kissing the one and giving his hand to the other. "Our father has gained three votes to-day, but he still needs six to have the majority."

"Then is there no means of buying them?" cried the elder of the two women, while the younger, instead of speaking, asked him with a look.

"Certainly, my mother, certainly," replied the young man; "and it is just about that that my father has been thinking. He is giving Cardinal Orsini his palace at Rome and his two castles of Monticello and Soriano; to Cardinal Colonna his abbey of Subiaco; he gives Cardinal Sant' Angelo the bishopric of Porto, with the furniture and cellar; to the Cardinal of Parma the town of Nepi; to the Cardinal of Genoa the church of Santa Maria-in-Via-Lata; and lastly, to Cardinal Savelli the church of Santa Maria Maggiore and the town of Cività Castellana; as to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, he knows already that the day before yesterday we sent to his house four mules laden with silver and plate, and out of this treasure he has engaged to give

five thousand ducats to the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice."

"But how shall we get the others to know the intentions of Roderigo?" asked the elder of the two women.

"My father has provided for everything, and proposes an easy method; you know, my mother, with what sort of ceremonial the cardinals' dinner is carried in."

"Yes, on a litter, in a large basket with the arms of the cardinal for whom the meal is prepared."

"My father has bribed the bishop who examines it: to-morrow is a feast-day; to the Cardinals Orsini, Colonna, Savelli, Sant' Angelo, and the Cardinals of Parma and of Genoa, chickens will be sent for hot meat, and each chicken will contain a deed of gift duly drawn up, made by me in my father's name, of the houses, palaces, or churches which are destined for each."

"Capital!" said the elder of the two women; "now, I am certain, all will go well."

"And by the grace of God," added the younger, with a strangely mocking smile, "our father will be pope."

"Oh, it will be a fine day for us!" cried Francesco.

"And for Christendom," replied his sister, with a still more ironical expression.

"Lucrezia, Lucrezia," said the mother, "you do not deserve the happiness which is coming to us."

"What does that matter, if it comes all the same? Besides, you know the proverb, mother: 'Large families are blessed of the Lord'; and still more so our family, which is so patriarchal."

At the same time she cast on her brother a look so wanton that the young man blushed under it: but as at the moment he had to think of other things than his illicit loves, he ordered that four servants should be awakened; and while they were getting armed to accompany him, he drew up and signed the six deeds of gift which were to be carried the next day to the cardinals; for, not wishing to be seen at their houses, he thought he would profit by the night-time to carry them himself to certain persons in his confidence who would have them passed in, as had been arranged, at the dinner-hour. Then, when the deeds were quite ready and the servants also, Francesco went out with them, leaving the two women to dream golden dreams of their future greatness.

From the first dawn of day the people hurried anew, as ardent and interested as on the evening before, to the Piazza of the Vatican, where, at the ordinary time,—that is, at ten o'clock in the morning,—the smoke rose again as usual, evoking laughter and murmuring, as it announced that none

of the cardinals had secured the majority. A report, however, began to be spread about that the chances were divided between three candidates, who were Roderigo Borgia, Giuliano della Rovera, and Ascanio Sforza; for the people as yet knew nothing of the four mules laden with plate and silver which had been led to Sforza's house, by reason of which he had given up his own votes to his rival. In the midst of the agitation excited in the crowd by this new report a solemn chanting was heard; it proceeded from a procession, led by the Cardinal Camerlengo, with the object of obtaining from Heaven the speedy election of a pope: this procession, starting from the church of Ara Cœli at the Capitol, was to make stations before the principal Madonnas and the most frequented churches. As soon as the silver crucifix was perceived which went in front, the most profound silence prevailed, and everyone fell on his knees; thus a supreme calm followed the tumult and uproar which had been heard a few minutes before, and which at each appearance of the smoke had assumed a more threatening character: there was a shrewd suspicion that the procession, as well as having a religious end in view, had a political object also, and that its influence was intended to be as great on earth as in heaven. In any case, if such had been the design of the Cardinal Camerlengo, he had not deceived himself, and the

effect was what he desired: when the procession had gone past, the laughing and joking continued, but the cries and threats had completely ceased.

The whole day passed thus; for in Rome nobody works. You are either a cardinal or a lacquey, and you live, nobody knows how. The crowd was still extremely numerous, when, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, another procession, which had quite as much power of provoking noise as the first of imposing silence, traversed in its turn the Piazza of St. Peter's: this was the dinner procession. The people received it with the usual bursts of laughter, without suspecting, for all their irreverence, that this procession, more efficacious than the former, had just settled the election of the new pope.

The hour of the *Ave Maria* came as on the evening before; but, as on the evening before, the waiting of the whole day was lost; for, as half-past eight struck, the daily smoke reappeared at the top of the chimney. But when at the same moment rumours which came from the inside of the Vatican were spread abroad, announcing that, in all probability, the election would take place the next day, the good people preserved their patience. Besides, it had been very hot that day, and they were so broken with fatigue and roasted by the sun, these dwellers in shade and idleness, that they had no strength left to complain.

The morning of the next day, which was the 11th of August, 1492, arose stormy and dark; this did not hinder the multitude from thronging the piazzas, streets, doors, houses, churches. Moreover, this disposition of the weather was a real blessing from Heaven; for if there were heat, at least there would be no sun. Towards nine o'clock threatening storm-clouds were heaped up over all the Trastevere; but to this crowd what mattered rain, lightning, or thunder? They were preoccupied with a concern of a very different nature; they were waiting for their pope: a promise had been made them for to-day, and it could be seen by the manner of all, that if the day should pass without any election taking place, the end of it might very well be a riot; therefore, in proportion as the time advanced, the agitation grew greater. Nine o'clock, half-past nine, a quarter to ten struck, without anything happening to confirm or destroy their hopes. At last the first stroke of ten was heard; all eyes turned towards the chimney: ten o'clock struck slowly, each stroke vibrating in the heart of the multitude. At last the tenth stroke trembled, then vanished shuddering into space, and a great cry breaking simultaneously from a hundred thousand breasts followed the silence: "*Non v'e fumo!* There is no smoke!" In other words, "We have a pope."

At this moment the rain began to fall; but no one

paid any attention to it, so great were the transports of joy and impatience among all the people. At last a little stone was detached from the walled window which gave on the balcony and upon which all eyes were fixed: a general shout saluted its fall; little by little the aperture grew larger, and in a few minutes it was large enough to allow a man to come out on the balcony.

The Cardinal Ascanio Sforza appeared; but at the moment when he was on the point of coming out, frightened by the rain and the lightning, he hesitated an instant, and finally drew back: immediately the multitude in their turn broke out like a tempest into cries, curses, howls, threatening to tear down the Vatican and to go and seek their pope themselves. At this noise Cardinal Sforza, more terrified by the popular storm than by the storm in the heavens, advanced on the balcony, and between two thunderclaps, in a moment of silence astonishing to anyone who had just heard the clamour that went before, made the following proclamation:—

"I announce to you a great joy: the most Eminent and most Reverend Signor Roderigo Lenzuolo Borgia, Archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal-Deacon of San Nicolao-in-Carcere, Vice-Chancellor of the Church, has now been elected Pope, and has assumed the name of Alexander VI."

The news of this nomination was received with

strange joy. Roderigo Borgia had the reputation of a dissolute man, it is true, but libertinism had mounted the throne with Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII, so that for the Romans there was nothing new in the singular situation of a pope with a mistress and five children. The great thing for the moment was that the power fell into strong hands; and it was more important for the tranquillity of Rome that the new pope inherited the sword of St. Paul than that he inherited the keys of St. Peter.

And so, in the feasts that were given on this occasion, the dominant character was much more warlike than religious, and would have appeared rather to suit with the election of some young conqueror than the exaltation of an old pontiff: there was no limit to the pleasantries and prophetic epigrams on the name of Alexander, which for the second time seemed to promise the Romans the empire of the world; and the same evening, in the midst of brilliant illuminations and bonfires, which seemed to turn the town into a lake of flame, the following epigram was read, amid the acclamation of the people:—

"Rome under Cæsar's rule in ancient story
At home and o'er the world victorious trod;
But Alexander still extends his glory:
Cæsar was man, but Alexander God."

As to the new pope, scarcely had he completed the formalities of etiquette which his exaltation imposed

upon him, and paid to each man the price of his simony, when from the height of the Vatican he cast his eyes upon Europe, a vast political game of chess, which he cherished the hope of directing at the will of his own genius.

CHAPTER II

THE world had now arrived at one of those supreme moments of history when everything is transformed between the end of one period and the beginning of another: in the East Turkey, in the South Spain, in the West France, and in the North Germany, all were going to assume, together with the title of great Powers, that influence which they were destined to exert in the future over the secondary States. Accordingly we too, with Alexander VI, will cast a rapid glance over them, and see what were their respective situations in regard to Italy, which they all coveted as a prize.

Constantine, Palæologos Dragozès, besieged by three hundred thousand Turks, after having appealed in vain for aid to the whole of Christendom, had not been willing to survive the loss of his empire, and had been found in the midst of the dead, close to the Tophana Gate; and on the 30th of May, 1453, Mahomet II had made his entry into Constantinople, where, after a reign which had earned for him the surname of *Fatile,* or the Conqueror, he had died leaving two sons, the elder of whom had ascended the throne under the name of Bajazet II.

The accession of the new sultan, however, had not taken place with the tranquillity which his right as

elder brother and his father's choice of him should have promised. His younger brother, D'jem, better known under the name of Zizimeh, had argued that whereas he was born in the purple—that is, born during the reign of Mahomet—Bajazet was born prior to his epoch, and was therefore the son of a private individual. This was rather a poor trick; but where force is all and right is naught, it was good enough to stir up a war. The two brothers, each at the head of an army, met accordingly in Asia in 1482. D'jem was defeated after a seven hours' fight, and pursued by his brother, who gave him no time to rally his army: he was obliged to embark from Cilicia, and took refuge in Rhodes, where he implored the protection of the Knights of St. John. They, not daring to give him an asylum in their island so near to Asia, sent him to France, where they had him carefully guarded in one of their commanderies, in spite of the urgency of Cait Bey, Sultan of Egypt, who, having revolted against Bajazet, desired to have the young prince in his army to give his rebellion the appearance of legitimate warfare. The same demand, moreover, with the same political object, had been made successively by Mathias Corvinus, King of Hungary, by Ferdinand, King of Aragon and Sicily, and by Ferdinand, King of Naples.

On his side Bajazet, who knew all the importance

of such a rival, if he once allied himself with any one of the princes with whom he was at war, had sent ambassadors to Charles VIII, offering, if he would consent to keep D'jem with him, to give him a considerable pension, and to give to France the sovereignty of the Holy Land, so soon as Jerusalem should be conquered by the Sultan of Egypt. The King of France had accepted these terms.

But then Innocent VIII had intervened, and in his turn had claimed D'jem, ostensibly to give support by the claims of the refugee to a crusade which he was preaching against the Turks, but in reality to appropriate the pension of 40,000 ducats to be given by Bajazet to any one of the Christian princes who would undertake to be his brother's gaoler. Charles VIII had not dared to refuse to the spiritual head of Christendom a request supported by such holy reasons; and therefore D'jem had quitted France, accompanied by the Grand Master d'Aubusson, under whose direct charge he was; but his guardian had consented, for the sake of a cardinal's hat, to yield up his prisoner. Thus, on the 13th of March, 1489, the unhappy young man, cynosure of so many interested eyes, made his solemn entry into Rome, mounted on a superb horse, clothed in a magnificent oriental costume, between the Prior of Auvergne, nephew of the Grand Master d'Aubusson, and Francesco Cibo, the son of the pope.

After this he had remained there, and Bajazet, faithful to promises which it was so much his interest to fulfil, had punctually paid to the sovereign pontiff a pension of 40,000 ducats.

So much for Turkey.

Ferdinand and Isabella were reigning in Spain, and were laying the foundations of that vast power which was destined, five-and-twenty years later, to make Charles v declare that the sun never set on his dominions. In fact, these two sovereigns, on whom history has bestowed the name of Catholic, had reconquered in succession nearly all Spain, and driven the Moors out of Granada, their last entrenchment; while two men of genius, Bartolomé Diaz and Christopher Columbus, had succeeded, much to the profit of Spain, the one in recovering a lost world, the other in conquering a world yet unknown. They had accordingly, thanks to their victories in the ancient world and their discoveries in the new, acquired an influence at the court of Rome which had never been enjoyed by any of their predecessors.

So much for Spain.

In France, Charles VIII had succeeded his father, Louis XI, on the 30th of August, 1483. Louis by dint of executions, had tranquillised his kingdom and smoothed the way for a child who ascended the throne under the regency of a woman. And the

regency had been a glorious one, and had put down the pretensions of princes of the blood, put an end to civil wars, and united to the crown all that yet remained of the great independent fiefs. The result was that at the epoch where we now are, here was Charles VIII, about twenty-two years of age, a prince (if we are to believe La Trémouille) little of body but great of heart; a child (if we are to believe Commines) only now making his first flight from the nest, destitute of both sense and money, feeble in person, full of self-will, and consorting rather with fools than with the wise; lastly, if we are to believe Guicciardini, who was an Italian, might well have brought a somewhat partial judgment to bear upon the subject, a young man of little wit concerning the actions of men, but carried away by an ardent desire for rule and the acquisition of glory, a desire based far more on his shallow character and impetuosity than on any consciousness of genius: he was an enemy to all fatigue and all business, and when he tried to give his attention to it he showed himself always totally wanting in prudence and judgment. If anything in him appeared at first sight to be worthy of praise, on a closer inspection it was found to be something nearer akin to vice than to virtue. He was liberal, it is true, but without thought, with no measure and no discrimination. He was sometimes inflexible in

will; but this was through obstinacy rather than a constant mind; and what his flatterers called goodness deserved far more the name of insensibility to injuries or poverty of spirit.

As to his physical appearance, if we are to believe the same author, it was still less admirable, and answered marvellously to his weakness of mind and character. He was small, with a large head, a short thick neck, broad chest, and high shoulders; his thighs and legs were long and thin; and as his face also was ugly—and was only redeemed by the dignity and force of his glance—and all his limbs were disproportionate with one another, he had rather the appearance of a monster than a man. Such was he whom Fortune was destined to make a conqueror, for whom Heaven was reserving more glory than he had power to carry.

So much for France.

The Imperial throne was occupied by Frederic III, who had been rightly named the Peaceful, not for the reason that he had always maintained peace, but because, having constantly been beaten, he had always been forced to make it. The first proof he had given of this very philosophical forbearance was during his journey to Rome, whither he betook himself to be consecrated. In crossing the Apennines he was attacked by brigands. They robbed him, but he made no

pursuit. And so, encouraged by example and by the impunity of lesser thieves, the greater ones soon took part in the robberies. Amurath seized part of Hungary. Mathias Corvinus took Lower Austria, and Frederic consoled himself for these usurpations by repeating the maxim, *Forgetfulness is the best cure for the losses we suffer.* At the time we have now reached, he had just, after a reign of fifty-three years, affianced his son Maximilian to Marie of Burgundy and had put under the ban of the Empire his son-in-law, Albert of Bavaria, who laid claim to the ownership of the Tyrol. He was therefore too full of his family affairs to be troubled about Italy. Besides, he was busy looking for a motto for the house of Austria, an occupation of the highest importance for a man of the character of Frederic III. This motto, which Charles V was destined almost to render true, was at last discovered, to the great joy of the old emperor, who, judging that he had nothing more to do on earth after he had given this last proof of sagacity, died on the 19th of August, 1493, leaving the empire to his son Maximilian.

This motto was simply founded on the five vowels, *a, e, i, o, u,* the initial letters of these five words—

"AUSTRIAE EST IMPERARE ORBI UNIVERSO."

This means—

"It is the destiny of Austria to rule over the whole world."

So much for Germany.

Now that we have cast a glance over the four nations which were on the way, as we said before, to become European Powers, let us turn our attention to those secondary States which formed a circle more contiguous to Rome, and whose business it was to serve as armour, so to speak, to the spiritual queen of the world, should it please any of these political giants whom we have described to make encroachments with a view to an attack, on the seas or the mountains, the Adriatic Gulf or the Alps, the Mediterranean or the Apennines.

These were the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, the magnificent republic of Florence, and the most serene republic of Venice.

The kingdom of Naples was in the hands of the old Ferdinand, whose birth was not only illegitimate, but probably also well within the prohibited degrees. His father, Alfonso of Aragon, received his crown from Giovanna of Naples, who had adopted him as her successor. But since, in the fear of having no heir, the queen on her deathbed had named two instead of one, Alfonso had to sustain his rights against Réné. The two aspirants for some time

disputed the crown. At last the house of Aragon carried the day over the house of Anjou, and in the course of the year 1442, Alfonso definitely secured his seat on the throne. Of this sort were the claims of the defeated rival which we shall see Charles VIII maintaining later on. Ferdinand had neither the courage nor the genius of his father, and yet he triumphed over his enemies, one after another: he had two rivals, both far superior in merit to himself. The one was his nephew, the Count of Viana, who, basing his claim on his uncle's shameful birth, commanded the whole Aragonese party; the other was Duke John of Calabria, who commanded the whole Angevin party. Still he managed to hold the two apart, and to keep himself on the throne by dint of his prudence, which often verged upon duplicity. He had a cultivated mind, and had studied the sciences—above all, law. He was of middle height, with a large handsome head, his brow open and admirably framed in beautiful white hair, which fell nearly down to his shoulders. Moreover, though he had rarely exercised his physical strength in arms, this strength was so great that one day, when he happened to be on the square of the Mercato Nuovo at Naples, he seized by the horns a bull that had escaped and stopped him short, in spite of all the efforts the animal made to escape from his hands. Now the election of Alexan-

der had caused him great uneasiness, and in spite of his usual prudence he had not been able to restrain himself from saying before the bearer of the news that not only did he fail to rejoice in this election, but also that he did not think that any Christian could rejoice in it, seeing that Borgia, having always been a bad man, would certainly make a bad pope. To this he added that, even were the choice an excellent one and such as would please everybody else, it would be none the less fatal to the house of Aragon, although Roderigo was born her subject and owed to her the origin and progress of his fortunes; for wherever reasons of state come in, the ties of blood and parentage are soon forgotten, and, *a fortiori*, relations arising from the obligations of nationality.

Thus one may see that Ferdinand judged Alexander VI with his usual perspicacity; this, however, did not hinder him, as we shall soon perceive, from being the first to contract an alliance with him.

The duchy of Milan belonged nominally to John Galeazzo, grandson of Francesco Sforza, who had seized it by violence on the 26th of February, 1450, and bequeathed it to his son, Galeazzo Maria, father of the young prince now reigning; we say nominally, because the real master of the Milanese was at this period not the legitimate heir who was supposed to possess it, but his uncle Ludovico, surnamed *il Moro*,

because of the mulberry tree which he bore in his arms. After being exiled with his two brothers, Philip who died of poison in 1479, and Ascanio who became the cardinal, he returned to Milan some days after the assassination of Galeazzo Maria, which took place on the 26th of December, 1476, in St. Stephen's Church, and assumed the regency for the young duke, who at that time was only eight years old. From now onward, even after his nephew had reached the age of two-and-twenty, Ludovico continued to rule, and according to all probabilities was destined to rule a long time yet; for, some days after the poor young man had shown a desire to take the reins himself, he had fallen sick, and it was said, and not in a whisper, that he had taken one of those slow but mortal poisons of which princes made so frequent a use at this period, that, even when a malady was natural, a cause was always sought connected with some great man's interests. However it may have been, Ludovico had relegated his nephew, now too weak to busy himself henceforward with the affairs of his duchy, to the castle of Pavia, where he lay and languished under the eyes of his wife Isabella, daughter of King Ferdinand of Naples.

As to Ludovico, he was an ambitious man, full of courage and astuteness, familiar with the sword and with poison, which he used alternately, according to the occasion, without feeling any repugnance

or any predilection for either of them; but quite decided to be his nephew's heir whether he died or lived.

Florence, although she had preserved the name of a republic, had little by little lost all her liberties, and belonged in fact, if not by right, to Piero dei Medici, to whom she had been bequeathed as a paternal legacy by Lorenzo, as we have seen, at the risk of his soul's salvation.

The son, unfortunately, was far from having the genius of his father: he was handsome, it is true, whereas Lorenzo, on the contrary, was remarkably ugly; he had an agreeable, musical voice, whereas Lorenzo had always spoken through his nose; he was instructed in Latin and Greek, his conversation was pleasant and easy, and he improvised verses almost as well as the so-called Magnificent; but he was both ignorant of political affairs and haughtily insolent in his behaviour to those who had made them their study. Added to this, he was an ardent lover of pleasure, passionately addicted to women, incessantly occupied with bodily exercises that should make him shine in their eyes, above all with tennis, a game at which he very highly excelled: he promised himself that, when the period of mourning was past, he would occupy the attention not only of Florence but of the whole of Italy, by the splendour of his courts and the renown of his fetes. Piero dei

Médici had at any rate formed this plan; but Heaven decreed otherwise.

As to the most serene republic of Venice, whose doge was Agostino Barbarigo, she had attained, at the time we have reached, to her highest degree of power and splendour. From Cadiz to the Palus Mæotis, there was no port that was not open to her thousand ships; she possessed in Italy, beyond the coastline of the canals and the ancient duchy of Venice, the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, Crema, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua; she owned the marches of Treviso, which comprehend the districts of Feltre, Belluno, Cadore, Polesella of Rovigo, and the principality of Ravenna; she also owned the Friuli, except Aquileia; Istria, except Trieste; she owned, on the east side of the Gulf, Zara, Spalatro, and the shore of Albania; in the Ionian Sea, the islands of Zante and Corfu; in Greece, Lepanto and Patras; in the Morea, Morone, Corone, Neapolis, and Argos; lastly, in the Archipelago, besides several little towns and stations on the coast, she owned Candia and the kingdom of Cyprus.

Thus from the mouth of the Po to the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean, the most serene republic was mistress of the whole coastline, and Italy and Greece seemed to be mere suburbs of Venice.

In the intervals of space left free between Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice, petty tyrants had arisen who exercised an absolute sovereignty over their territories: thus the Colonnas were at Ostia and at Nettuna, the Montefeltri at Urbino, the Manfredi at Faenza, the Bentivogli at Bologna, the Malatesta family at Rimini, the Vitelli at Città di Castello, the Baglioni at Perugia, the Orsini at Vicovaro, and the princes of Este at Ferrara.

Finally, in the centre of this immense circle, composed of great Powers, of secondary States, and of little tyrannies, Romé was set on high, the most exalted, yet the weakest of all, without influence, without lands, without an army, without gold. It was the concern of the new pope to secure all this: let us see, therefore, what manner of man was this Alexander VI, for undertaking and accomplishing such a project.

CHAPTER III

RODERIGO LENZUOLO was born at Valencia, in Spain, in 1430 or 1431, and on his mother's side was descended, as some writers declare, of a family of royal blood, which had cast its eyes on the tiara only after cherishing hopes of the crowns of Aragon and Valencia. Roderigo from his infancy had shown signs of a marvellous quickness of mind, and as he grew older he exhibited an intelligence extremely apt for the study of sciences, especially law and jurisprudence: the result was that his first distinctions were gained in the law, a profession wherein he soon made a great reputation by his ability in the discussion of the most thorny cases. All the same, he was not slow to leave this career, and abandoned it quite suddenly for the military profession, which his father had followed; but after various actions which served to display his presence of mind and courage, he was as much disgusted with this profession as with the other; and since it happened that at the very time he began to feel this disgust his father died, leaving a considerable fortune, he resolved to do no more work, but to live according to his own fancies and caprices. About this time

he became the lover of a widow who had two daughters. The widow dying, Roderigo took the girls under his protection, put one into a convent, and as the other was one of the loveliest women imaginable, made her his mistress. This was the notorious Rosa Vanozza, by whom he had five children—Francesco, Cæsar, Lucrezia, and Goffredo; the name of the fifth is unknown.

Roderigo, retired from public affairs, was given up entirely to the affections of a lover and a father, when he heard that his uncle, who loved him like a son, had been elected pope under the name of Calixtus III. But the young man was at this time so much a lover that love imposed silence on ambition, and indeed he was almost terrified at the exaltation of his uncle, which was no doubt destined to force him once more into public life. Consequently, instead of hurrying to Rome, as anyone else in his place would have done, he was content to indite to His Holiness a letter in which he begged for the continuation of his favours, and wished him a long and happy reign.

This reserve on the part of one of his relatives, contrasted with the ambitious schemes which beset the new pope at every step, struck Calixtus III in a singular way: he knew the stuff that was in young Roderigo, and at a time when he was besieged on all sides by mediocrities, this powerful nature hold-

ing modestly aside gained new grandeur in his eyes: so he replied instantly to Roderigo that on the receipt of his letter he must quit Spain for Italy, Valencia for Rome.

This letter uprooted Roderigo from the centre of happiness he had created for himself, and where he might perhaps have slumbered on like an ordinary man, if fortune had not thus interposed to drag him forcibly away. Roderigo was happy, Roderigo was rich; the evil passions which were natural to him had been, if not extinguished, at least lulled; he was frightened himself at the idea of changing the quiet life he was leading for the ambitious, agitated career that was promised him; and instead of obeying his uncle, he delayed the preparations for departure, hoping that Calixtus would forget him. It was not so: two months after he received the letter from the pope, there arrived at Valencia a prelate from Rome, the bearer of Roderigo's nomination to a benefice worth 20,000 ducats a year, and also a positive order to the holder of the post to come and take possession of his charge as soon as possible.

Holding back was no longer feasible: so Roderigo obeyed; but as he did not wish to be separated from the source whence had sprung eight years of happiness, Rosa Vanozza also left Spain, and while he was going to Rome, she betook herself to Venice, accompanied by two confidential servants, and under

the protection of a Spanish gentleman named Manuel Melchior.

Fortune kept the promises she had made to Roderigo: the pope received him as a son, and made him successively Archbishop of Valencia, Cardinal-Deacon, and Vice-Chancellor. To all these favours Calixtus added a revenue of 40,000 ducats, so that at the age of scarcely thirty-five Roderigo found himself the equal of a prince in riches and power.

Roderigo had had some reluctance about accepting the cardinalship, which kept him fast at Rome, and would have preferred to be General of the Church, a position which would have allowed him more liberty for seeing his mistress and his family; but his uncle Calixtus made him reckon with the possibility of being his successor some day, and from that moment the idea of being the supreme head of kings and nations took such hold of Roderigo, that he no longer had any end in view but that which his uncle had made him entertain.

From that day forward, there began to grow up in the young cardinal that talent for hypocrisy which made of him the most perfect incarnation of the devil that has perhaps ever existed; and Roderigo was no longer the same man: with words of repentance and humility on his lips, his head bowed as though he were bearing the weight of his past sins, disparaging the riches which he had acquired, and which, ac-

cording to him, were the wealth of the poor and ought to return to the poor, he passed his life in churches, monasteries, and hospitals, acquiring, his historian tells us, even in the eyes of his enemies, the reputation of a Solomon for wisdom, of a Job for patience, and of a very Moses for his promulgation of the word of God: Rosa Vanozza was the only person in the world who could appreciate the value of this pious cardinal's conversion.

It proved a lucky thing for Roderigo that he had assumed this pious attitude, for his protector died after a reign of three years three months and nineteen days, and he was now sustained by his own merit alone against the numerous enemies he had made by his rapid rise to fortune: so during the whole of the reign of Pius II he lived always apart from public affairs, and only reappeared in the days of Sixtus IV, who made him the gift of the abbacy of Subiaco, and sent him in the capacity of ambassador to the kings of Aragon and Portugal. On his return, which took place during the pontificate of Innocent VIII, he decided to fetch his family at last to Rome: thither they came, escorted by Don Manuel Melchior, who from that moment passed as the husband of Rosa Vanozza, and took the name of Count Ferdinand of Castile. The Cardinal Roderigo received the noble Spaniard as a countryman and a friend; and he, who expected to lead a most retired

life, engaged a house in the street of the Lungará, near the church of Regina Cœli, on the banks of the Tiber. There it was that, after passing the day in prayers and pious works, Cardinal Roderigo used to repair each evening and lay aside his mask. And it was said, though nobody could prove it, that in this house infamous scenes passed: Report said the dissipations were of so dissolute a character that their equals had never been seen in Rome. With a view to checking the rumours that began to spread abroad, Roderigo sent Cæsar to study at Pisa, and married Lucrezia to a young gentleman of Aragon; thus there only remained at home Rosa Vanozza and her two sons: such was the state of things when Innocent VIII died and Roderigo Borgia was proclaimed pope.

We have seen by what means the nomination was effected; and so the five cardinals who had taken no part in this simony—namely, the Cardinals of Naples, Siena, Portugal, Santa Maria-in-Porticu, and St. Peter-in-Vinculis—protested loudly against this election, which they treated as a piece of jobbery; but Roderigo had none the less, however it was done, secured his majority; Roderigo was none the less the two hundred and sixtieth successor of St. Peter.

Alexander VI, however, though he had arrived at his object, did not dare throw off at first the mask

which the Cardinal Borgia had worn so long, although when he was apprised of his election he could not dissimulate his joy; indeed, on hearing the favourable result of the scrutiny, he lifted his hands to heaven and cried, in the accents of satisfied ambition, "Am I then pope? Am I then Christ's vicar? Am I then the keystone of the Christian world?"

"Yes, holy father," replied Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the same who had sold to Roderigo the nine votes that were at his disposal at the Conclave for four mules laden with silver; "and we hope by your election to give glory to God, repose to the Church, and joy to Christendom, seeing that you have been chosen by the Almighty Himself as the most worthy among all your brethren."

But in the short interval occupied by this reply, the new pope had already assumed the papal authority, and in a humble voice and with hands crossed upon his breast, he spoke:

"We hope that God will grant us His powerful aid, in spite of our weakness, and that He will do for us that which He did for the apostle when aforetime He put into his hands the keys of heaven and entrusted to him the government of the Church, a government which without the aid of God would prove too heavy a burden for mortal man; but God promised that His Spirit should direct him; God will do the same, I trust, for us; and for your part,

we fear not lest any of you fail in that holy obedience which is due unto the head of the Church, even as the flock of Christ was bidden to follow the prince of the apostles."

Having spoken these words, Alexander donned the pontifical robes, and through the windows of the Vatican had strips of paper thrown out on which his name was written in Latin. These, blown by the wind, seemed to convey to the whole world the news of the great event which was about to change the face of Italy. The same day couriers started for all the courts of Europe.

Cæsar Borgia learned the news of his father's election at the University of Pisa, where he was a student. His ambition had sometimes dreamed of such good fortune, yet his joy was little short of madness. He was then a young man, about twenty-two or twenty-four years of age, skilful in all bodily exercises, and especially in fencing; he could ride barebacked the most fiery steeds, could cut off the head of a bull at a single sword-stroke; moreover, he was arrogant, jealous, and insincere. According to Tommasi, he was great among the godless, as his brother Francesco was good among the great. As to his face, even contemporary authors have left utterly different descriptions; for some have painted him as a monster of ugliness, while others, on the contrary, extol his beauty. This contradiction is

due to the fact that at certain times of the year, and especially in the spring, his face was covered with an eruption which, so long as it lasted, made him an object of horror and disgust, while all the rest of the year he was the sombre, black-haired cavalier with pale skin and tawny beard whom Raphael shows us in the fine portrait he made of him. And historians, both chroniclers and painters, agree as to his fixed and powerful gaze, behind which burned a ceaseless flame, giving to his face something infernal and superhuman. Such was the man whose fortune was to fulfil all his desires. He had taken for his motto, *Aut Caesar, aut nihil:* Cæsar or nothing.

Cæsar posted to Rome with certain of his friends, and scarcely was he recognised at the gates of the city when the deference shown to him gave instant proof of the change in his fortunes: at the Vatican the respect was twice as great; mighty men bowed down before him as before one mightier than themselves. And so, in his impatience, he stayed not to visit his mother or any other member of his family, but went straight to the pope to kiss his feet; and as the pope had been forewarned of his coming, he awaited him in the midst of a brilliant and numerous assemblage of cardinals, with the three other brothers standing behind him. His Holiness received Cæsar with a gracious countenance; still, he did not allow himself any demonstration of his paternal love,

but, bending towards him, kissed him on the forehead, and inquired how he was and how he had fared on his journey. Cæsar replied that he was wonderfully well, and altogether at the service of His Holiness: that, as to the journey, the trifling inconveniences and short fatigue had been compensated, and far more than compensated, by the joy which he felt in being able to adore upon the papal throne a pope who was so worthy. At these words, leaving Cæsar still on his knees, and reseating himself—for he had risen from his seat to embrace him—the pope assumed a grave and composed expression of face, and spoke as follows, loud enough to be heard by all, and slowly enough for everyone present to be able to ponder and retain in his memory even the least of his words:—

"We are convinced, Cæsar, that you are peculiarly rejoiced in beholding us on this sublime height, so far above our deserts, whereto it has pleased the Divine goodness to exalt us. This joy of yours is first of all our due because of the love we have always borne you and which we bear you still, and in the second place is prompted by your own personal interest, since henceforth you may feel sure of receiving from our pontifical hand those benefits which your own good works shall deserve. But if your joy—and this we say to you as we have even now said to your brothers—if your joy is founded on

aught else than this, you are very greatly mistaken, Cæsar, and you will find yourself sadly deceived. Perhaps we have been ambitious—we confess this humbly before the face of all men—passionately and immoderately ambitious to attain to the dignity of sovereign pontiff, and to reach this end we have followed every path that is open to human industry; but we have acted thus, vowing an inward vow that when once we had reached our goal, we would follow no other path but that which conduces best to the service of God and to the advancement of the Holy See, so that the glorious memory of the deeds that we shall do may efface the shameful recollection of the deeds we have already done. Thus shall we, let us hope, leave to those who follow us a track whereupon if they find not the footsteps of a saint, they may at least tread in the path of a true pontiff. God, who has furthered the means, claims at our hands the fruits, and we desire to discharge to the full this mighty debt that we have incurred to Him; and accordingly we refuse to arouse by any deceit the stern rigour of His judgments. One sole hindrance could have power to shake our good intentions, and that might happen should we feel too keen an interest in your fortunes. Therefore are we armed beforehand against our love, and therefore have we prayed to God beforehand that we stumble not because of you; for in the path of favouritism a pope

cannot slip without a fall, and cannot fall without injury and dishonour to the Holy See. Even to the end of our life we shall deplore the faults which have brought this experience home to us; and may it please God that our uncle Calixtus of blessed memory bear not this day in purgatory the burden of our sins, more heavy, alas, than his own! Ah, he was rich in every virtue, he was full of good intentions; but he loved too much his own people, and among them he loved me chief. And so he suffered this love to lead him blindly astray, all this love that he bore to his kindred, who to him were too truly flesh of his flesh, so that he heaped upon the heads of a few persons only, and those perhaps the least worthy, benefits which would more fittingly have rewarded the deserts of many. In truth, he bestowed upon our house treasures that should never have been amassed at the expense of the poor, or else should have been turned to a better purpose. He severed from the ecclesiastical State, already weak and poor, the duchy of Spoleto and other wealthy properties, that he might make them fiefs to us; he confided to our weak hands the vice-chancellorship, the vice-prefecture of Rome, the generalship of the Church, and all the other most important offices, which, instead of being monopolised by us, should have been conferred on those who were most meritorious. Moreover, there were persons who were raised on our

recommendation to posts of great dignity, although they had no claims but such as our undue partiality accorded them; others were left out with no reason for their failure except the jealousy excited in us by their virtues. To rob Ferdinand of Aragon of the kingdom of Naples, Calixtus kindled a terrible war, which by a happy issue only served to increase our fortune, and by an unfortunate issue must have brought shame and disaster upon the Holy See. Lastly, by allowing himself to be governed by men who sacrificed public good to their private interests, he inflicted an injury, not only upon the pontifical throne and his own reputation, but what is far worse, far more deadly, upon his own conscience. And yet, O wise judgments of God! hard and incessantly though he toiled to establish our fortunes, scarcely had he left empty that supreme seat which we occupy to-day, when we were cast down from the pinnacle whereon we had climbed, abandoned to the fury of the rabble and the vindictive hatred of the Roman barons, who chose to feel offended by our goodness to their enemies. Thus, not only, we tell you, Cæsar, not only did we plunge headlong from the summit of our grandeur, losing the worldly goods and dignities which our uncle had heaped at our feet, but for very peril of our life we were condemned to a voluntary exile, we and our friends, and in this way only did we contrive to escape the storm

which our too good fortune had stirred up against us. Now this is a plain proof that God mocks at men's designs when they are bad ones. How great an error is it for any pope to devote more care to the welfare of a house, which cannot last more than a few years, than to the glory of the Church, which will last for ever! What utter folly for any public man whose position is not inherited and cannot be bequeathed to his posterity, to support the edifice of his grandeur on any other basis than the noblest virtue practised for the general good, and to suppose that he can ensure the continuance of his own fortune otherwise than by taking all precautions against sudden whirlwinds which are wont to arise in the midst of a calm, and to blow up the storm-clouds—I mean the host of enemies. Now any one of these enemies who does his worst can cause injuries far more powerful than any help that is at all likely to come from a hundred friends and their lying promises. If you and your brothers walk in the path of virtue which we shall now open for you, every wish of your heart shall be instantly accomplished; but if you take the other path, if you have ever hoped that our affection will wink at disorderly life, then you will very soon find out that we are truly pope, Father of the Church, not father of the family; that, vicar of Christ as we are, we shall act as we deem best for Christendom, and not as you deem best for

your own private good. And now that we have come to a thorough understanding, Cæsar, receive our pontifical blessing." And with these words, Alexander VI rose up, laid his hands upon his son's head, for Cæsar was still kneeling, and then retired into his apartments, without inviting him to follow.

The young man remained awhile stupefied at this discourse, so utterly unexpected, so utterly destructive at one fell blow to his most cherished hopes. He rose giddy and staggering like a drunken man, and at once leaving the Vatican, hurried to his mother, whom he had forgotten before, but sought now in his despair. Rosa Vanozza possessed all the vices and all the virtues of a Spanish courtesan; her devotion to the Virgin amounted to superstition, her fondness for her children to weakness, and her love for Roderigo to sensuality. In the depth of her heart she relied on the influence she had been able to exercise over him for nearly thirty years; and like a snake, she knew how to envelop him in her coils when the fascination of her glance had lost its power. Rosa knew of old the profound hypocrisy of her lover, and thus she was in no difficulty about reassuring Cæsar.

Lucrezia was with her mother when Cæsar arrived; the two young people exchanged a lover-like kiss beneath her very eyes: and before he left Cæsar had made an appointment for the same evening with

Lucrezia, who was now living—apart from her husband, to whom Roderigo paid a pension—in her palace of the Via del Pelegrino, opposite the Campo dei Fiori, and there enjoying perfect liberty.

In the evening, at the hour fixed, Cæsar appeared at Lucrezia's; but he found there his brother Francesco. The two young men had never been friends. Still, as their tastes were very different, hatred with Francesco was only the fear of the deer for the hunter; but with Cæsar it was the desire for vengeance and that lust for blood which lurks perpetually in the heart of a tiger. The two brothers none the less embraced, one from general kindly feeling, the other from hypocrisy; but at first sight of one another the sentiment of a double rivalry, first in their father's and then in their sister's good graces, had sent the blood mantling to the cheek of Francesco, and called a deadly pallor into Cæsar's. So the two young men sat on, each resolved not to be the first to leave, when all at once there was a knock at the door, and a rival was announced before whom both of them were bound to give way: it was their father.

Rosa Vanozza was quite right in comforting Cæsar. Indeed, although Alexander VI had repudiated the abuses of nepotism, he understood very well the part that was to be played for his benefit by his sons and his daughter; for he knew he could

always count on Lucrezia and Cæsar, if not on Francesco and Goffredo. In these matters the sister was quite worthy of her brother. Lucrezia was wanton in imagination, godless by nature, ambitious and designing: she had a craving for pleasure, admiration, honours, money, jewels, gorgeous stuffs, and magnificent mansions. A true Spaniard beneath her golden tresses, a courtesan beneath her frank looks, she carried the head of a Raphael Madonna, and concealed the heart of a Messalina. She was dear to Roderigo both as daughter and as mistress, and he saw himself reflected in her as in a magic mirror, every passion and every vice. Lucrezia and Cæsar were accordingly the best beloved of his heart, and the three composed that diabolical trio which for eleven years occupied the pontifical throne, like a mocking parody of the heavenly Trinity.

Nothing occurred at first to give the lie to Alexander's professions of principle in the discourse he addressed to Cæsar, and the first year of his pontificate exceeded all the hopes of Rome at the time of his election. He arranged for the provision of stores in the public granaries with such liberality, that within the memory of man there had never been such astonishing abundance; and with a view to extending the general prosperity to the lowest class, he organised numerous doles to be paid

out of his private fortune, which made it possible for the very poor to participate in the general banquet from which they had been excluded for long enough. The safety of the city was secured, from the very first days of his accession, by the establishment of a strong and vigilant police force, and a tribunal consisting of four magistrates of irreproachable character, empowered to prosecute all nocturnal crimes; which during the last pontificate had been so common that their very numbers made impunity certain: these judges from the first showed a severity which neither the rank nor the purse of the culprit could modify. This presented such a great contrast to the corruption of the last reign,—in the course of which the vice-chamberlain one day remarked in public, when certain people were complaining of the venality of justice, "God wills not that a sinner die, but that he live and pay,"—that the capital of the Christian world felt for one brief moment restored to the happy days of the papacy. So, at the end of a year, Alexander VI had reconquered that spiritual credit, so to speak, which his predecessors lost. His political credit was still to be established, if he was to carry out the first part of his gigantic scheme. To arrive at this, he must employ two agencies—alliances and conquests. His plan was to begin with alliances. The gentleman of Aragon who had married Lucrezia when she was only the daugh-

of Cardinal Roderigo Borgia was not a man powerful enough, either by birth and fortune or by intellect, to enter with any sort of effect into the plots and plans of Alexander VI; the separation was therefore changed into a divorce, and Lucrezia Borgia was now free to remarry. Alexander opened up two negotiations at the same time: he needed an ally to keep a watch on the policy of the neighbouring States. John Sforza, grandson of Alexander Sforza, brother of the great Francis I, Duke of Milan, was lord of Pesaro; the geographical situation of this place, on the coast, on the way between Florence and Venice, was wonderfully convenient for his purpose; so Alexander first cast an eye upon him, and as the interest of both parties was evidently the same, it came about that John Sforza was very soon Lucrezia's second husband.

At the same time overtures had been made to Alfonso of Aragon, heir presumptive to the crown of Naples, to arrange a marriage between Doña Sancia, his illegitimate daughter, and Goffredo, the pope's third son; but as the old Ferdinand wanted to make the best bargain he could out of it, he dragged on the negotiations as long as possible, urging that the two children were not of marriageable age, and so, highly honoured as he felt in such a prospective alliance, there was no hurry about the engagement. Matters stopped at this point, to

the great annoyance of Alexander VI, who saw through this excuse, and understood that the postponement was nothing more or less than a refusal. Accordingly Alexander and Ferdinand remained in *statu quo*, equals in the political game, both on the watch till events should declare for one or other. The turn of fortune was for Alexander.

Italy, though tranquil, was instinctively conscious that her calm was nothing but the lull which goes before a storm. She was too rich and too happy to escape the envy of other nations. As yet the plains of Pisa had not been reduced to marsh-lands by the combined negligence and jealousy of the Florentine Republic, neither had the rich country that lay around Rome been converted into a barren desert by the wars of the Colonna and Orsini families; not yet had the Marquis of Marignan razed to the ground a hundred and twenty villages in the republic of Siena alone; and though the Maremma was unhealthy, it was not yet a poisonous marsh: it is a fact that Flavio Blondo, writing in 1450, describes Ostia as being merely less flourishing than in the days of the Romans, when she had numbered 50,000 inhabitants, whereas now in our own day there are barely 30 in all.

The Italian peasants were perhaps the most blest on the face of the earth: instead of living scattered about the country in solitary fashion, they lived in

villages that were enclosed by walls as a protection for their harvests, animals, and farm implements; their houses—at any rate those that yet stand—prove that they lived in much more comfortable and beautiful surroundings than the ordinary townsman of our day. Further, there was a community of interests, and many people collected together in the fortified villages, with the result that little by little they attained to an importance never acquired by the boorish French peasants or the German serfs; they bore arms, they had a common treasury, they elected their own magistrates, and whenever they went out to fight, it was to save their common country.

Also commerce was no less flourishing than agriculture; Italy at this period was rich in industries—silk, wool, hemp, fur, alum, sulphur, bitumen; those products which the Italian soil could not bring forth were imported, from the Black Sea, from Egypt, from Spain, from France, and often returned whence they came, their worth doubled by labour and fine workmanship. The rich man brought his merchandise, the poor his industry: the one was sure of finding workmen, the other was sure of finding work.

Art also was by no means behindhand: Dante, Giotto, Brunelleschi, and Donatello were dead, but Ariosto, Raphael, Bramante, and Michael Angelo were now living. Rome, Florence, and Naples had inherited the masterpieces of antiquity; and the man-

uscripts of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides had come (thanks to the conquest of Mahomet II) to rejoin the statue of Xanthippus and the works of Phidias and Praxiteles. The principal sovereigns of Italy had come to understand, when they let their eyes dwell upon the fat harvests, the wealthy villages, the flourishing manufactories, and the marvellous churches, and then compared with them the poor and rude nations of fighting men who surrounded them on all sides, that some day or other they were destined to become for other countries what America was for Spain, a vast gold-mine for them to work. In consequence of this, a league offensive and defensive had been signed, about 1480, by Naples, Milan, Florence, and Ferrara, prepared to take a stand against enemies within or without, in Italy or outside. Ludovico Sforza, who was more than anyone else interested in maintaining this league, because he was nearest to France, whence the storm seemed to threaten, saw in the new pope's election means not only of strengthening the league, but of making its power and unity conspicuous in the sight of Europe.

CHAPTER IV

ON the occasion of each new election to the papacy, it is the custom for all the Christian States to send a solemn embassy to Rome, to renew their oath of allegiance to the Holy Father. Ludovico Sforza conceived the idea that the ambassadors of the four Powers should unite and make their entry into Rome on the same day, appointing one of their envoys, viz. the representative of the King of Naples, to be spokesman for all four. Unluckily, this plan did not agree with the magnificent projects of Piero dei Medici. That proud youth, who had been appointed ambassador of the Florentine Republic, had seen in the mission entrusted to him by his fellow-citizens the means of making a brilliant display of his own wealth. From the day of his nomination onwards, his palace was constantly filled with tailors, jewellers, and merchants of priceless stuffs; magnificent clothes had been made for him, embroidered with precious stones which he had selected from the family treasures. All his jewels, perhaps the richest in Italy, were distributed about the liveries of his pages, and one of them, his favourite, was to wear a collar of pearls valued by itself at 100,000 ducats, or almost a million of our francs. In his party the

Bishop of Arezzo, Gentile, who had once been Lorenzo dei Medici's tutor, was elected as second ambassador, and it was his duty to speak. Now Gentile, who had prepared his speech, counted on his eloquence to charm the ear quite as much as Piero counted on his riches to dazzle the eye. But the eloquence of Gentile would be lost completely if nobody was to speak but the ambassador of the King of Naples; and the magnificence of Piero dei Medici would never be noticed at all if he went to Rome mixed up with all the other ambassadors. These two important interests, compromised by the Duke of Milan's proposition, changed the whole face of Italy.

Ludovico Sforza had already made sure of Ferdinand's promise to conform to the plan he had invented, when the old king, at the solicitation of Piero, suddenly drew back. Sforza found out how this change had come about, and learned that it was Piero's influence that had overmastered his own. He could not disentangle the real motives that had promised the change, and imagined there was some secret league against himself: he attributed the changed political programme to the death of Lorenzo dei Medici. But whatever its cause might be, it was evidently prejudicial to his own interests: Florence, Milan's old ally, was abandoning her for Naples. He resolved to throw a counter weight into the

scales; so, betraying to Alexander the policy of Piero and Ferdinand, he proposed to form a defensive and offensive alliance with him and admit the republic of Venice; Duke Hercules III of Ferrara was also to be summoned to pronounce for one or other of the two leagues. Alexander VI, wounded by Ferdinand's treatment of himself, accepted Ludovico Sforza's proposition, and an Act of Confederation was signed on the 22nd of April, 1493, by which the new allies pledged themselves to set on foot for the maintenance of the public peace an army of 20,000 horse and 6,000 infantry.

Ferdinand was frightened when he beheld the formation of this league; but he thought he could neutralise its effects by depriving Ludovico Sforza of his regency, which he had already kept beyond the proper time, though as yet he was not strictly an usurper. Although the young Galeazzo, his nephew, had reached the age of two-and-twenty, Ludovico Sforza none the less continued regent. Now Ferdinand definitely proposed to the Duke of Milan that he should resign the sovereign power into the hands of his nephew, on pain of being declared an usurper.

This was a bold stroke; but there was a risk of inciting Ludovico Sforza to start one of those political plots that he was so familiar with, never recoiling from any situation, however dangerous it might be. This was exactly what happened: Sforza,

uneasy about his duchy, resolved to threaten Ferdinand's kingdom.

Nothing could be easier: he knew the warlike notions of Charles VIII, and the pretensions of the house of France to the kingdom of Naples. He sent two ambassadors to invite the young king to claim the rights of Anjou usurped by Aragon; and with a view to reconciling Charles to so distant and hazardous an expedition, offered him a free and friendly passage through his own States.

Such a proposition was welcome to Charles VIII, as we might suppose from our knowledge of his character; a magnificent prospect was opened to him as by an enchanter: what Ludovico Sforza was offering him was virtually the command of the Mediterranean, the protectorship of the whole of Italy; it was an open road, through Naples and Venice, that well might lead to the conquest of Turkey or the Holy Land, if he ever had the fancy to avenge the disasters of Nicopolis and Mansourah. So the proposition was accepted, and a secret alliance was signed, with Count Charles di Belgiojoso and the Count of Cajazzo acting for Ludovico Sforza, and the Bishop of St. Malo and Seneschal de Beaucaire for Charles VIII. By this treaty it was agreed—

That the King of France should attempt the conquest of the kingdom of Naples;

That the Duke of Milan should grant a passage

to the King of France through his territories, and accompany him with five hundred lances;

That the Duke of Milan should permit the King of France to send out as many ships of war as he pleased from Genoa;

Lastly, that the Duke of Milan should lend the King of France 200,000 ducats, payable when he started.

On his side, Charles VIII agreed—

To defend the personal authority of Ludovico Sforza over the duchy of Milan against anyone who might attempt to turn him out;

To keep two hundred French lances always in readiness to help the house of Sforza, at Asti, a town belonging to the Duke of Orleans by the inheritance of his mother, Valentina Visconti;

Lastly, to hand over to his ally the principality of Tarentum immediately after the conquest of Naples was effected.

This treaty was scarcely concluded when Charles VIII, who exaggerated its advantages, began to dream of freeing himself from every let or hindrance to the expedition. Precautions were necessary; for his relations with the great Powers were far from being what he could have wished.

Indeed, Henry VII had disembarked at Calais with a formidable army, and was threatening France with another invasion.

Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, if they had not assisted at the fall of the house of Anjou, had at any rate helped the Aragon party with men and money.

Lastly, the war with the emperor acquired a fresh impetus when Charles VIII sent back Margaret of Burgundy to her father Maximilian, and contracted a marriage with Anne of Brittany.

By the treaty of Etaples, on the 3rd of November, 1492, Henry VII cancelled the alliance with the King of the Romans, and pledged himself not to follow his conquests.

This cost Charles VIII 745,000 gold crowns and the expenses of the war with England.

By the treaty of Barcelona, dated the 19th of January, 1493, Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella agreed never to grant aid to their cousin, Ferdinand of Naples, and never to put obstacles in the way of the French king in Italy.

This cost Charles VIII Perpignan, Roussillon, and the Cerdagne, which had all been given to Louis XI as a hostage for the sum of 300,000 ducats by John of Aragon; but at the time agreed upon, Louis XI would not give them up for the money, for the old fox knew very well how important were these doors to the Pyrenees, and proposed in case of war to keep them shut.

Lastly, by the treaty of Senlis, dated the 23rd of

May, 1493, Maximilian granted a gracious pardon to France for the insult her king had offered him.

It cost Charles VIII the counties of Burgundy, Artois, Charolais, and the seigniory of Noyers, which had come to him as Margaret's dowry, and also the towns of Aire, Hesdin, and Bethune, which he promised to deliver up to Philip of Austria on the day he came of age.

By dint of all these sacrifices the young king made peace with his neighbours, and could set on foot the enterprise that Ludovico Sforza had proposed. We have already explained that the project came into Sforza's mind when his plan about the deputation was refused, and that the refusal was due to Piero dei Medici's desire to make an exhibition of his magnificent jewels, and Gentile's desire to make his speech.

Thus the vanity of a tutor and the pride of his scholar together combined to agitate the civilized world from the Gulf of Tarentum to the Pyrenees.

Alexander VI was in the very centre of the impending earthquake, and before Italy had any idea that the earliest shocks were at hand he had profited by the perturbed preoccupation of other people to give the lie to that famous speech we have reported. He created cardinal John Borgia, a nephew, who during the last pontificate had been elected Archbishop of Montréal and Governor of Rome. This

promotion caused no discontent, because of John's antecedents; and Alexander, encouraged by the success of this, promised to Cæsar Borgia the archbishopric of Valencia, a benefice he had himself enjoyed before his elevation to the papacy. But here the difficulty arose on the side of the recipient. The young man, full-blooded, with all the vices and natural instincts of a captain of condottieri, had very great trouble in assuming even the appearance of a Churchman's virtue; but as he knew from his own father's mouth that the highest secular dignities were reserved for his elder brother, he decided to take what he could get, for fear of getting nothing; but his hatred for Francesco grew stronger, for from henceforth he was doubly his rival, both in love and ambition.

Suddenly Alexander beheld the old King Ferdinand returning to his side, and at the very moment when he least expected it. The pope was too clever a politician to accept a reconciliation without finding out the cause of it; he soon learned what plots were hatching at the French court against the kingdom of Naples, and the whole situation was explained.

Now it was his turn to impose conditions.

He demanded the completion of a marriage between Goffredo, his third son, and Doña Sancia, Alfonso's illegitimate daughter.

He demanded that she should bring her husband

as dowry the principality of Squillace and the county of Cariati, with an income of 10,000 ducats and the office of protonotary, one of the seven great crown offices which are independent of royal control.

He demanded for his eldest son, whom Ferdinand the Catholic had just made Duke of Gandia, the principality of Tricarico, the counties of Chiaramonte, Lauria, and Carinola, an income of 12,000 ducats, and the first of the seven great offices which should fall vacant.

He demanded that Virginio Orsini, his ambassador at the Neapolitan court, should be given a third great office, viz. that of Constable, the most important of them all.

Lastly, he demanded that Giuliano della Rovere, one of the five cardinals who had opposed his election and was now taking refuge at Ostia, where the oak whence he took his name and bearings is still to be seen carved on all the walls, should be driven out of that town, and the town itself given over to him.

In exchange, he merely pledged himself never to withdraw from the house of Aragon the investiture of the kingdom of Naples accorded by his predecessors. Ferdinand was paying somewhat dearly for a simple promise; but on the keeping of this promise the legitimacy of his power wholly depended. For the kingdom of Naples was a fief of the Holy See;

and to the pope alone belonged the right of pronouncing on the justice of each competitor's pretensions; the continuance of this investiture was therefore of the highest conceivable importance to Aragon just at the time when Anjou was rising up with an army at her back to dispossess her.

For a year after he mounted the papal throne, Alexander VI had made great strides, as we see, in the extension of his temporal power. In his own hands he held, to be sure, only the least in size of the Italian territories; but by the marriage of his daughter Lucrezia with the lord of Pesaro he was stretching out one hand as far as Venice, while by the marriage of the Prince of Squillace with Doña Sancia, and the territories conceded to the Duke of Gandia, he was touching with the other hand the boundary of Calabria.

When this treaty, so advantageous for himself, was duly signed, he made Cæsar Cardinal of Santa Maria Novella, for Cæsar was always complaining of being left out in the distribution of his father's favours.

Only, as there was as yet no precedent in Church history for a bastard's donning the scarlet, the pope hunted up four false witnesses who declared that Cæsar was the son of Count Ferdinand of Castile; who was, as we know, that valuable person Don Manuel Melchior, and who played the father's part

with just as much solemnity as he had played the husband's.

The wedding of the two bastards was most splendid, rich with the double pomp of Church and King. As the pope had settled that the young bridal pair should live near him, Cæsar Borgia, the new cardinal, undertook to manage the ceremony of their entry into Rome and the reception, and Lucrezia, who enjoyed at her father's side an amount of favour hitherto unheard of at the papal court, desired on her part to contribute all the splendour she had it in her power to add. He therefore went to receive the young people with a stately and magnificent escort of lords and cardinals, while she awaited them attended by the loveliest and noblest ladies of Rome, in one of the halls of the Vatican. A throne was there prepared for the pope, and at his feet were cushions for Lucrezia and Doña Sancia. "Thus," writes Tommaso Tommasi, "by the look of the assembly and the sort of conversation that went on for hours, you would suppose you were present at some magnificent and voluptuous royal audience of ancient Assyria, rather than at the severe consistory of a Roman pontiff, whose solemn duty it is to exhibit in every act the sanctity of the name he bears. But," continues the same historian, "if the Eve of Pentecost was spent in such worthy functions, the celebrations of the coming of the Holy Ghost on the

following day were no less decorous and becoming to the spirit of the Church; for thus writes the master of the ceremonies in his journal:

" 'The pope made his entry into the Church of the Holy Apostles, and beside him on the marble steps of the pulpit where the canons of St. Peter are wont to chant the Epistle and Gospel, sat Lucrezia his daughter and Sancia his son's wife: round about them, a disgrace to the Church and a public scandal, were grouped a number of other Roman ladies far more fit to dwell in Messalina's city than in St. Peter's.' "

So at Rome and Naples did men slumber while ruin was at hand; so did they waste their time and squander their money in a vain display of pride; and this was going on while the French, thoroughly alive, were busy laying hands upon the torches with which they would presently set Italy on fire.

Indeed, the designs of Charles VIII for conquest were no longer for anybody a matter of doubt. The young king had sent an embassy to the various Italian States, composed of Perrone dei Baschi, Briçonnet, d'Aubigny, and the president of the Provençal Parliament. The mission of this embassy was to demand from the Italian princes their co-operation in recovering the rights of the crown of Naples for the house of Anjou.

The embassy first approached the Venetians, de-

manding aid and counsel for the king their master. But the Venetians, faithful to their political tradition, which had gained for them the sobriquet of "the Jews of Christendom," replied that they were not in a position to give any aid to the young king, so long as they had to keep ceaselessly on guard against the Turks; that, as to advice, it would be too great a presumption in them to give advice to a prince who was surrounded by such experienced generals and such able ministers.

Perrone dei Baschi, when he found he could get no other answer, next made for Florence. Piero dei Medici received him at a grand council, for he summoned on this occasion not only the seventy, but also the gonfalonieri who had sat for the last thirty-four years in the Signoria. The French ambassador put forward his proposal, that the republic should permit their army to pass through her States, and pledge herself in that case to supply for ready money all the necessary victual and fodder. The magnificent republic replied that if Charles VIII had been marching against the Turks instead of against Ferdinand, she would be only too ready to grant everything he wished; but being bound to the house of Aragon by a treaty, she could not betray her ally by yielding to the demands of the King of France.

The ambassadors next turned their steps to Siena. The poor little republic, terrified by the honour of

being considered at all, replied that it was her desire to preserve a strict neutrality, that she was too weak to declare beforehand either for or against such mighty rivals, for she would naturally be obliged to join the stronger party. Furnished with this reply, which had at least the merit of frankness, the French envoys proceeded to Rome, and were conducted into the pope's presence, where they demanded the investiture of the kingdom of Naples for their king.

Alexander VI replied that, as his predecessors had granted this investiture to the house of Aragon, he could not take it away, unless it were first established that the house of Anjou had a better claim than the house that was to be dispossessed. Then he represented to Perrone dei Baschi that, as Naples was a fief of the Holy See, to the pope alone the choice of her soverign properly belonged, and that in consequence to attack the reigning sovereign was to attack the Church itself.

The result of the embassy, we see, was not very promising for Charles VIII; so he resolved to rely on his ally Ludovico Sforza alone, and to relegate all other questions to the fortunes of war.

A piece of news that reached him about this time strengthened him in this resolution: this was the death of Ferdinand. The old king had caught a severe cold and cough on his return from the hunt-

ing-field, and in two days he was at his last gasp. On the 25th of January, 1494, he passed away, at the age of seventy, after a thirty-six years' reign, leaving the throne to his elder son, Alfonso, who was immediately chosen as his successor.

Ferdinand never belied his title of "the happy ruler." His death occurred at the very moment when the fortune of his family was changing.

The new king, Alfonso, was not a novice in arms: he had already fought successfully against Florence and Venice, and had driven the Turks out of Otranto; besides, he had the name of being as cunning as his father in the tortuous game of politics so much in vogue at the Italian courts. He did not despair of counting among his allies the very enemy he was at war with when Charles VIII first put forward his pretensions, we mean Bajazet II. So he despatched to Bajazet one of his confidential ministers, Camillo Pandone, to give the Turkish emperor to understand that the expedition to Italy was to the King of France nothing but a blind for approaching the scene of Mahomedan conquests, and that if Charles VIII were once at the Adriatic it would only take him a day or two to get across and attack Macedonia; from there he could easily go by land to Constantinople. Consequently he suggested that Bajazet for the maintenance of their common interests should supply six thousand horse and six

thousand infantry; he himself would furnish their pay so long as they were in Italy. It was settled that Pandone should be joined at Tarentum by Giorgio Bucciarda, Alexander VI's envoy, who was commissioned by the pope to engage the Turks to help him against the Christians. But while he was waiting for Bajazet's reply, which might involve a delay of several months, Alfonso requested that a meeting might take place between Piero dei Medici, the pope, and himself, to take counsel together about important affairs. This meeting was arranged at Vicovaro, near Tivoli, and the three interested parties duly met on the appointed day.

The intention of Alfonso, who before leaving Naples had settled the disposition of his naval forces, and given his brother Frederic the command of a fleet that consisted of thirty-six galleys, eighteen large and twelve small vessels, with injunctions to wait at Livorno and keep a watch on the fleet Charles VIII was getting ready at the port of Genoa, was above all things to check with the aid of his allies the progress of operations on land. Without counting the contingent he expected his allies to furnish, he had at his immediate disposal a hundred squadrons of heavy cavalry, twenty men in each, and three thousand bowmen and light horse. He proposed, therefore, to advance at once into Lombardy, to get up a revolution in favour of his nephew

Galeazzo, and to drive Ludovico Sforza out of Milan before he could get help from France; so that Charles VIII, at the very time of crossing the Alps, would find an enemy to fight instead of a friend who had promised him a safe passage, men, and money.

This was the scheme of a great politician and a bold commander; but as everybody had come in pursuit of his own interests, regardless of the common good, this plan was very coldly received by Piero dei Medici, who was afraid lest in the war he should play only the same poor part he had been threatened with in the affair of the embassy; by Alexander VI it was rejected, because he reckoned on employing the troops of Alfonso on his own account. He reminded the King of Naples of one of the conditions of the investiture he had promised him, viz. that he should drive out the Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere from the town of Ostia, and give up the town to him, according to the stipulation already agreed upon. Besides, the advantages that had accrued to Virginio Orsini, Alexander's favourite, from his embassy to Naples had brought upon him the ill-will of Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, who owned nearly all the villages round about Rome. Now the pope could not endure to live in the midst of such powerful enemies, and the most important matter was to deliver him from all of them, seeing that it was really of moment that he should be at peace who was the

head and soul of the league whereof the others were only the body and limbs.

Although Alfonso had clearly seen through the motives of Piero's coldness, and Alexander had not even given him the trouble of seeking his, he was none the less obliged to bow to the will of his allies, leaving the one to defend the Apennines against the French, and helping the other to shake himself free of his neighbours in the Romagna. Consequently he pressed on the siege of Ostia, and added to Virginio's forces, which already amounted to two hundred men of the papal army, a body of his own light horse; this little army was to be stationed round about Rome, and was to enforce obedience from the Colonnas. The rest of his troops Alfonso divided into two parties: one he left in the hands of his son Ferdinand, with orders to scour the Romagna and worry the petty princes into levying and supporting the contingent they had promised, while with the other he himself defended the defiles of the Abruzzi.

On the 23rd of April, at three o'clock in the morning, Alexander VI was freed from the first and fiercest of his foes; Giuliano della Rovere, seeing the impossibility of holding out any longer against Alfonso's troops, embarked on a brigantine which was to carry him to Savona.

From that day forward Virginio Orsini began that famous partisan warfare which reduced the

country about Rome to the most pathetic desolation the world has ever seen. During all this time Charles VIII was at Lyons, not only uncertain as to the route he ought to take for getting into Italy, but even beginning to reflect a little on the chances and risks of such an expedition. He had found no sympathy anywhere except with Ludovico Sforza; so it appeared not unlikely that he would have to fight not the kingdom of Naples alone, but the whole of Italy to boot. In his preparations for war he had spent almost all the money at his disposal; the Lady of Beaujeu and the Duke of Bourbon both condemned his enterprise; Briçonnet, who had advised it, did not venture to support it now; at last Charles, more irresolute than ever, had recalled several regiments that had actually started, when Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, driven out of Italy by the pope, arrived at Lyons, and presented himself before the king.

The cardinal, full of hatred, full of hope, hastened to Charles, and found him on the point of abandoning that enterprise on which, as Alexander's enemy, della Rovere rested his whole expectation of vengeance. He informed Charles of the quarrelling among his enemies; he showed him that each of them was seeking his own ends—Piero dei Medici the gratification of his pride, the pope the aggrandisement of his house. He pointed out that armed fleets were in the ports of Villefranche, Marseilles, and

Genoa, and that these armaments would be lost; he reminded him that he had sent Pierre d'Urfé, his grand equerry, on in advance, to have splendid accommodation prepared in the Spinola and Doria palaces. Lastly, he urged that ridicule and disgrace would fall on him from every side if he renounced an enterprise so loudly vaunted beforehand, for whose successful execution, moreover, he had been obliged to sign three treaties of peace that were all vexatious enough, viz. with Henry VII, with Maximilian, and with Ferdinand the Catholic. Giuliano della Rovere had exercised true insight in probing the vanity of the young king, and Charles VIII did not hesitate for a single moment. He ordered his cousin, the Duke of Orleans (who later on became Louis XII), to take command of the French fleet and bring it to Genoa; he despatched a courier to Antoine de Bessay, Baron de Tricastel, bidding him take to Asti the 2000 Swiss foot-soldiers he had levied in the cantons; lastly, he started himself from Vienne, in Dauphiné, on the 23rd of August, 1494, crossed the Alps by Mont Génèvre, without encountering a single body of troops to dispute his passage, descended into Piedmont and Monferrato, both just then governed by women regents, the sovereigns of both principalities being children, Charles John Aimé and William John, aged respectively six and eight.

The two regents appeared before Charles VIII, one at Turin, one at Casale, each at the head of a numerous and brilliant court, and both glittering with jewels and precious stones. Charles, although he quite well knew that for all these friendly demonstrations they were both bound by treaty to his enemy, Alfonso of Naples, treated them all the same with the greatest politeness, and when they made protestations of friendship, asked them to let him have a proof of it, suggesting that they should lend him the diamonds they were covered with. The two regents could do no less than obey the invitation which was really a command. They took off necklaces, rings, and earrings. Charles VIII gave them a receipt accurately drawn up, and pledged the jewels for 24,000 ducats. Then, enriched by this money, he resumed his journey and made his way towards Asti. The Duke of Orleans held the sovereignty of Asti, as we said before, and hither came to meet Charles both Ludovico Sforza and his father-in-law, Hercules d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. They brought with them not only the promised troops and money, but also a court composed of the loveliest women in Italy.

The balls, fêtes, and tourneys began with a magnificence surpassing anything that Italy had ever seen before. But suddenly they were interrupted by the king's illness. This was the first example

in Italy of the disease brought by Christopher Columbus from the New World, and was called by Italians the French, by Frenchmen the Italian disease. The probability is that some of Columbus's crew who were at Genoa or thereabouts had already brought over this strange and cruel complaint that counterbalanced the gains of the American gold-mines.

The king's indisposition, however, did not prove so grave as was at first supposed. He was cured by the end of a few weeks, and proceeded on his way towards Pavia, where the young Duke John Galeazzo lay dying. He and the King of France were first cousins, sons of two sisters of the house of Savoy. So Charles VIII was obliged to see him, and went to visit him in the castle where he lived more like prisoner than lord. He found him half reclining on a couch, pale and emaciated, some said in consequence of luxurious living, others from the effects of a slow but deadly poison. But whether or not the poor young man was desirous of pouring out a complaint to Charles, he did not dare say a word; for his uncle, Ludovico Sforza, never left the King of France for an instant. But at the very moment when Charles VIII was getting up to go, the door opened, and a young woman appeared and threw herself at the king's feet; she was the wife of the unlucky John Galeazzo, and came to entreat his cousin to do nothing against her father Alfonso,

nor against her brother Ferdinand. At sight of her, Sforza scowled with an anxious and threatening aspect, for he knew not what impression might be produced on his ally by this scene. But he was soon reassured; for Charles replied that he had advanced too far to draw back now, and that the glory of his name was at stake as well as the interests of his kingdom, and that these two motives were far too important to be sacrificed to any sentiment of pity he might feel, however real and deep it might be and was. The poor young woman, who had based her last hope on this appeal, then rose from her knees and threw herself sobbing into her husband's arms. Charles VIII and Ludovico Sforza took their leave: John Galeazzo was doomed.

Two days after, Charles VIII left for Florence, accompanied by his ally; but scarcely had they reached Parma when a messenger caught them up, and announced to Ludovico that his nephew was just dead: Ludovico at once begged Charles to excuse his leaving him to finish the journey alone; the interests which called him back to Milan were so important, he said, that he could not under the circumstances stay away a single day longer. As a fact he had to make sure of succeeding the man he had assassinated.

But Charles VIII continued his road not without some uneasiness. The sight of the young prince on

his deathbed had moved him deeply, for at the bottom of his heart he was convinced that Ludovico Sforza was his murderer; and a murderer might very well be a traitor. He was going forward into an unfamiliar country, with a declared enemy in front of him and a doubtful friend behind: he was now at the entrance to the mountains, and as his army had no store of provisions and only lived from hand to mouth, a forced delay, however short, would mean famine. In front of him was Fivizzano, nothing, it is true, but a village surrounded by walls, but beyond Fivizzano lay Sarzano and Pietra Santa, both of them considered impregnable fortresses; worse than this, they were coming into a part of the country that was especially unhealthy in October, had no natural product except oil, and even procured its own corn from neighbouring provinces; it was plain that a whole army might perish there in a few days either from scarcity of food or from the unwholesome air, both of which were more disastrous than the impediments offered at every step by the nature of the ground. The situation was grave; but the pride of Piero dei Medici came once more to the rescue of the fortunes of Charles VIII.

CHAPTER V

PIERO DEI MEDICI had, as we may remember, undertaken to hold the entrance to Tuscany against the French; when, however, he saw his enemy coming down from the Alps, he felt less confident about his own strength, and demanded help from the pope; but scarcely had the rumour of foreign invasion began to spread in the Romagna, than the Colonna family declared themselves the French king's men, and collecting all their forces seized Ostia, and there awaited the coming of the French fleet to offer a passage through Rome. The pope, therefore, instead of sending troops to Florence, was obliged to recall all his soldiers to be near the capital; the only promise he made to Piero was that if Bajazet should send him the troops that he had been asking for, he would despatch that army for him to make use of. Piero dei Medici had not yet taken any resolution or formed any plan, when he suddenly heard two startling pieces of news. A jealous neighbour of his, the Marquis of Torderiovo, had betrayed to the French the weak side of Fivizzano, so that they had taken it by storm, and had put its soldiers and inhabitants to the edge of

the sword; on another side, Gilbert of Montpensier, who had been lighting up the sea-coast so as to keep open the communications between the French army and their fleet, had met with a detachment sent by Paolo Orsini to Sarzano, to reinforce the garrison there, and after an hour's fighting had cut it to pieces. No quarter had been granted to any of the prisoners; every man the French could get hold of they had massacred.

This was the first occasion on which the Italians, accustomed as they were to the chivalrous contests of the fifteenth century, found themselves in contact with savage foreigners, who, less advanced in civilisation, had not yet come to consider war as a clever game, but looked upon it as simply a mortal conflict. So the news of these two butcheries produced a tremendous sensation at Florence, the richest city in Italy, and the most prosperous in commerce and in art. Every Florentine imagined the French to be like an army of those ancient barbarians who were wont to extinguish fire with blood. The prophecies of Savonarola, who had predicted the foreign invasion and the destruction that should follow it, were recalled to the minds of all; and so much perturbation was evinced that Piero dei Medici, bent on getting peace at any price, forced a decree upon the republic whereby she was to send an embassy to the conqueror; and obtained leave, resolved as he was to

deliver himself in person into the hands of the French monarch, to act as one of the ambassadors. He accordingly quitted Florence, accompanied by four other messengers, and on his arrival at Pietra Santa, sent to ask from Charles VIII a safe-conduct for himself alone. The day after he made this request, Briçonnet and de Piennes came to fetch him, and led him into the presence of Charles VIII.

Piero dei Medici, in spite of his name and influence, was in the eyes of the French nobility, who considered it a dishonourable thing to concern oneself with art or industry, nothing more than a rich merchant, with whom it would be absurd to stand upon any very strict ceremony. So Charles VIII received him on horseback, and addressing him with a haughty air, as a master might address a servant, demanded whence came this pride of his that made him dispute his entrance into Tuscany. Piero dei Medici replied that, with the actual consent of Louis XI, his father Lorenzo had concluded a treaty of alliance with Ferdinand of Naples; that accordingly he had acted in obedience to prior obligations, but as he did not wish to push too far his devotion to the house of Aragon or his opposition to France, he was ready to do whatever Charles VIII might demand of him. The king, who had never looked for such humility in his enemy, demanded that Sarzano should be given up to him: to this Piero dei Medici at

once consented. Then the conqueror, wishing to see how far the ambassador of the magnificent republic would extend his politeness, replied that this concession was far from satisfying him, and that he still must have the keys of Pietra Santa, Pisa, Librafatta, and Livorno. Piero saw no more difficulty about these than about Sarzano, and consented on Charles's mere promise by word of mouth to restore the town when he had achieved the conquest of Naples. At last Charles VIII, seeing that this man who had been sent out to negotiate with him was very easy to manage, exacted as a final condition, a *sine quâ non,* however, of his royal protection, that the magnificent republic should lend him the sum of 200,000 florins. Piero found it no harder to dispose of money than of fortresses, and replied that his fellow-citizens would be happy to render this service to their new ally. Then Charles VIII set him on horseback, and ordered him to go on in front, so as to begin to carry out his promises by yielding up the four fortresses he had insisted on having. Piero obeyed, and the French army, led by the grandson of Cosimo the Great and the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, continued its triumphal march through Tuscany.

On his arrival at Lucca, Piero dei Medici learnt that his concessions to the King of France were making a terrible commotion at Florence. The mag-

Pope Alessandro VI—Portrait taken from the fresco in the "Appartemente Borgia" in the Vatican, being part of the Resurrection painted by Pinturricchio. The apartments were closed up by Julius II, the implacable enemy of Alexander, and were not opened for hundreds of years until the reign of His Holiness, Leo XIII.

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nificent republic had supposed that what Charles VIII wanted was simply a passage through her territory, so when the news came there was a general feeling of discontent, which was augmented by the return of the other ambassadors, whom Piero had not even consulted when he took action as he did. Piero considered it necessary that he should return, so he asked Charles's permission to precede him to the capital. As he had fulfilled all his promises, except the matter of the loan, which could not be settled anywhere but at Florence, the king saw no objection, and the very evening after he quitted the French army Piero returned incognito to his palace in the Via Larga.

The next day he proposed to present himself before the Signoria, but when he arrived at the Piazza del Palazzo Vecchio, he perceived the gonfaloniere Jacopo de Nerli coming towards him, signalling to him that it was useless to attempt to go farther, and pointing out to him the figure of Luca Corsini standing at the gate, sword in hand: behind him stood guards, ordered, if need were, to dispute his passage. Piero dei Medici, amazed by an opposition that he was experiencing for the first time in his life, did not attempt resistance. He went home, and wrote to his brother-in-law, Paolo Orsini, to come and help him with his gendarmes. Unluckily for him, his letter was intercepted. The Signoria con-

sidered that it was an attempt at rebellion. They summoned the citizens to their aid; they armed hastily, sallied forth in crowds, and thronged about the piazza of the palace. Meanwhile Cardinal Gian dei Medici had mounted on horseback, and under the impression that the Orsini were coming to the rescue, was riding about the streets of Florence, accompanied by his servants and uttering his battle-cry, "Palle, Palle." But times had changed: there was no echo to the cry, and when the cardinal reached the Via dei Calizaioli, a threatening murmur was the only response, and he understood that instead of trying to arouse Florence he had much better get away before the excitement ran too high. He promptly retired to his own palace, expecting to find there his two brothers, Piero and Giuliano. But they, under the protection of Orsini and his gendarmes, had made their escape by the Porto San Gallo. The peril was imminent, and Gian dei Medici wished to follow their example; but wherever he went he was met by a clamour that grew more and more threatening. At last, as he saw that the danger was constantly increasing, he dismounted from his horse and ran into a house that he found standing open. This house by a lucky chance communicated with a convent of Franciscans; one of the friars lent the fugitive his dress, and the cardinal, under the protection of this humble incognito,

contrived at last to get outside Florence, and joined his two brothers in the Apennines.

The same day the Medici were declared traitors and rebels, and ambassadors were sent to the King of France. They found him at Pisa, where he was granting independence to the town which eighty-seven years ago had fallen under the rule of the Florentines. Charles VIII made no reply to the envoys, but merely announced that he was going to march on Florence.

Such a reply, one may easily understand, terrified the republic. Florence had no time to prepare a defence, and no strength in her present state to make one. But all the powerful houses assembled and armed their own servants and retainers, and awaited the issue, intending not to begin hostilities, but to defend themselves should the French make an attack. It was agreed that if any necessity should arise for taking up arms, the bells of the various churches in the town should ring a peal and so serve as a general signal. Such a resolution was perhaps of more significant moment in Florence than it could have been in any other town. For the palaces that still remain from that period are virtually fortresses and the eternal fights between Guelphs and Ghibellines had familiarised the Tuscan people with street warfare.

The king appeared, on the 17th of November, in

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the evening, at the gate of San Friano. He found there the nobles of Florence clad in their most magnificent apparel, accompanied by priests chanting hymns, and by a mob who were full of joy at any prospect of change, and hoped for a return of liberty after the fall of the Medici. Charles VIII stopped for a moment under a sort of gilded canopy that had been prepared for him, and replied in a few evasive words to the welcoming speeches which were addressed to him by the Signoria; then he asked for his lance, he set it in rest, and gave the order to enter the town, the whole of which he paraded with his army following him with arms erect, and then went down to the palace of the Medici, which had been prepared for him.

The next day negotiations commenced; but everyone was out of his reckoning. The Florentines had received Charles VIII as a guest, but he had entered the city as a conqueror. So when the deputies of the Signoria spoke of ratifying the treaty of Piero dei Medici, the king replied that such a treaty no longer existed, as they had banished the man who made it; that he had conquered Florence, as he proved the night before, when he entered lance in hand; that he should retain the sovereignty, and would make any further decision whenever it pleased him to do so; further, he would let them know later on whether he would reinstate the Medici

or whether he would delegate his authority to the Signoria: all they had to do was to come back the next day, and he would give them his ultimatum in writing.

This reply threw Florence into a great state of consternation; but the Florentines were confirmed in their resolution of making a stand. Charles, for his part, had been astonished by the great number of the inhabitants; not only was every street he had passed through thickly lined with people, but every house from garret to basement seemed overflowing with human beings. Florence indeed, thanks to her rapid increase in population, could muster nearly 150,000 souls.

The next day, at the appointed hour, the deputies made their appearance to meet the king. They were again introduced into his presence, and the discussion was reopened. At last, as they were coming to no sort of understanding, the royal secretary, standing at the foot of the throne upon which Charles VIII sat with covered head, unfolded a paper and began to read, article by article, the conditions imposed by the King of France. But scarcely had he read a third of the document when the discussion began more hotly than ever before. Then Charles VIII said that thus it should be, or he would order his trumpets to be sounded. Hereupon Piero Capponi, secretary to the republic, commonly called

the Scipio of Florence, snatched from the royal secretary's hand the shameful proposal of capitulation, and tearing it to pieces, exclaimed—

"Very good, sire; blow your trumpets, and we will ring our bells."

He threw the pieces in the face of the amazed reader, and dashed out of the room to give the terrible order that would convert the street of Florence into a battlefield.

Still, against all probabilities, this bold answer saved the town. The French supposed, from such audacious words, addressed as they were to men who so far had encountered no single obstacle, that the Florentines were possessed of sure resources, to them unknown: the few prudent men who retained any influence over the king advised him accordingly to abate his pretensions; the result was that Charles VIII offered new and more reasonable conditions, which were accepted, signed by both parties, and proclaimed on the 26th of November during mass in the cathedral of Santa Maria Del Fiore.

These were the conditions:—

The Signoria were to pay to Charles VIII, as subsidy, the sum of 120,000 florins, in three instalments;

The Signoria were to remove the sequestration imposed upon the property of the Medici, and to recall the decree that set a price on their heads;

The Signoria were to engage to pardon the Pisans, on condition of their again submitting to the rule of Florence;

Lastly, the Signoria were to recognise the claims of the Duke of Milan over Sarzano and Pietra Santa, and these claims thus recognised, were to be settled by arbitration.

In exchange for this, the King of France pledged himself to restore the fortresses that had been given up to him, either after he had made himself master of the town of Naples, or when this war should be ended by a peace or a two years' truce, or else when, for any reason whatsoever, he should have quitted Italy.

Two days after this proclamation, Charles VIII, much to the joy of the Signoria, left Florence, and advanced towards Rome by the route of Poggibondi and Siena.

The pope began to be affected by the general terror: he had heard of the massacres of Fivizzano, of Lunigiane, and of Imola; he knew that Piero dei Medici had handed over the Tuscan fortresses, that Florence had succumbed, and that Catherine Sforza had made terms with the conqueror; he saw the broken remnants of the Neapolitan troops pass disheartened through Rome, to rally their strength in the Abruzzi, and thus he found himself exposed to an enemy who was advancing upon him with the

whole of the Romagna under his control from one sea to the other, in a line of march extending from Piombino to Ancona.

It was at this juncture that Alexander VI received his answer from Bajazet II: the reason of so long a delay was that the pope's envoy and the Neapolitan ambassador had been stopped by Gian della Rovere, the Cardinal Giuliano's brother, just as they were disembarking at Sinigaglia. They were charged with a verbal answer, which was that the sultan at this moment was busied with a triple war, first with the Sultan of Egypt, secondly with the King of Hungary, and thirdly with the Greeks of Macedonia and Epirus; and therefore he could not, with all the will in the world, help His Holiness with armed men. But the envoys were accompanied by a favourite of the sultan's bearing a private letter to Alexander VI, in which Bajazet offered on certain conditions to help him with money. Although, as we see, the messengers had been stopped on the way, the Turkish envoy had all the same found a means of getting his despatch sent to the pope: we give it here in all its naïveté.

"Bajazet the Sultan, son of the Sultan Mahomet II, by the grace of God Emperor of Asia and Europe, to the Father and Lord of all the Christians, Alexander VI, Roman pontiff and pope by the will of heavenly Providence, first, greetings that we owe

him and bestow with all our heart. We make known to your Highness, by the envoy of your Mightiness, Giorgio Bucciarda, that we have been apprised of your convalescence, and received the news thereof with great joy and comfort. Among other matters, the said Bucciarda has brought us word that the King of France, now marching against your Highness, has shown a desire to take under his protection our brother D'jem, who is now under yours—a thing which is not only against our will, but which would also be the cause of great injury to your Highness and to all Christendom. In turning the matter over with your envoy Giorgio, we have devised a scheme most conducive to peace and most advantageous and honourable for your Highness; at the same time satisfactory to ourselves personally; it would be well if our aforesaid brother D'jem, who being a man is liable to death, and who is now in the hands of your Highness, should quit this world as soon as possible, seeing that his departure, a real good to him in his position, would be of great use to your Highness, and very conducive to your peace, while at the same time it would be very agreeable to us, your friend. If this proposition is favourably received, as we hope, by your Highness, in your desire to be friendly towards us, it would be advisable both in the interests of your Highness and for our own satisfaction that it should occur rather

sooner than later, and by the surest means you might be pleased to employ; so that our said brother D'jem might pass from the pains of this world into a better and more peaceful life, where at last he may find repose. If your Highness should adopt this plan and send us the body of our brother, we, the above-named Sultan Bajazet, pledge ourselves to send to your Highness, wheresoever and by whatsoever hands you please, the sum of 300,000 ducats, with which sum you could purchase some fair domain for your children. In order to facilitate this purchase, we would be willing, while awaiting the issue, to place the 300,000 ducats in the hands of a third party, so that your Highness might be quite certain of receiving the money on an appointed day, in return for the despatch of our brother's body. Moreover, we promise your Highness herewith, for your greater satisfaction, that never, so long as you shall remain on the pontifical throne, shall there be any hurt done to the Christians, neither by us, nor by our servants, nor by any of our compatriots, of whatsoever kind or condition they may be, neither on sea nor on land. And for the still further satisfaction of your Highness, and in order that no doubt whatever may remain concerning the fulfilment of our promises, we have sworn and affirmed in the presence of Bucciarda, your envoy, by the true God whom we adore and by our holy Gospels, that

they shall be faithfully kept from the first point unto the last. And now for the final and complete assurance of your Highness, in order that no doubt may still remain in your heart, and that you may be once again and profoundly convinced of our good faith, we the aforesaid Sultan Bajazet do swear by the true God, who has created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is, that we will religiously observe all that has been above said and declared, and in the future will do nothing and undertake nothing that may be contrary to the interests of your Highness.

"Given at Constantinople, in our palace, on the 12th of September A.D. 1494."

This letter was the cause of great joy to the Holy Father: the aid of four or five thousand Turks would be insufficient under the present circumstances, and would only serve to compromise the head of Christendom, while the sum of 300,000 ducats—that is, nearly a million francs—was good to get in any sort of circumstances. It is true that, so long as D'jem lived, Alexander was drawing an income of 180,000 livres, which as a life annuity represented a capital of nearly two millions; but when one needs ready money, one ought to be able to make a sacrifice in the way of discount. All the same, Alexander formed no definite plan, resolved on acting as circumstances should indicate.

But it was a more pressing business to decide how he should behave to the King of France: he had never anticipated the success of the French in Italy, and we have seen that he laid all the foundations of his family's future grandeur upon his alliance with the house of Aragon. But here was this house tottering, and a volcano more terrible than her own Vesuvius was threatening to swallow up Naples. He must therefore change his policy, and attach himself to the victor,—no easy matter, for Charles VIII was bitterly annoyed with the pope for having refused him the investiture and given it to Aragon.

In consequence, he sent Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini as an envoy to the king. This choice looked like a mistake at first, seeing that the ambassador was a nephew of Pius II, who had vigorously opposed the house of Anjou; but Alexander in acting thus had a second design, which could not be discerned by those around him. In fact, he had divined that Charles would not be quick to receive his envoy, and that, in the parleyings to which his unwillingness must give rise, Piccolomini would necessarily be brought into contact with the young king's advisers. Now, besides his ostensible mission to the king, Piccolomini had also secret instructions for the more influential among his counsellors. These were Briçonnet and Philippe de Lux-

embourg; and Piccolomini was authorised to promise a cardinal's hat to each of them. The result was just what Alexander had foreseen: his envoy could not gain admission to Charles, and was obliged to confer with the people about him. This was what the pope wished. Piccolomini returned to Rome with the king's refusal, but with a promise from Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxembourg that they would use all their influence with Charles in favour of the Holy Father, and prepare him to receive a fresh embassy.

But the French all this time were advancing, and never stopped more than forty-eight hours in any town, so that it became more and more urgent to get something settled with Charles. The king had entered Siena and Viterbo without striking a blow; Yves d'Alègre and Louis de Ligny had taken over Ostia from the hands of the Colonnas; Cività Vecchia and Corneto had opened their gates; the Orsini had submitted; even Gian Sforza, the pope's son-in-law, had retired from the alliance with Aragon. Alexander accordingly judged that the moment had come to abandon his ally, and sent to Charles the Bishops of Concordia and Terni, and his confessor, Monsignore Graziano. They were charged to renew to Briçonnet and Philippe de Luxembourg the promise of the cardinalship, and had full powers of negotiation in the name of their mas-

ter, both in case Charles should wish to include Alfonso II in the treaty, and in case he should refuse to sign an agreement with any other but the pope alone. They found the mind of Charles influenced now by the insinuation of Giuliano della Rovere, who, himself a witness of the pope's simony, pressed the king to summon a council and depose the head of the Church, and now by the secret support given him by the Bishops of Mans and St. Malo. The end of it was that the king decided to form his own opinion about the matter and settle nothing beforehand, and continued this route, sending the ambassadors back to the pope, with the addition of the Maréchal de Gié, the Seneschal de Beaucaire, and Jean de Gannay, first president of the Paris Parliament. They were ordered to say to the pope—

(1) That the king wished above all things to be admitted into Rome without resistance; that, on condition of a voluntary, frank, and loyal admission, he would respect the authority of the Holy Father and the privileges of the Church;

(2) That the king desired that D'jem should be given up to him, in order that he might make use of him against the sultan when he should carry the war into Macedonia or Turkey or the Holy Land;

(3) That the remaining conditions were so unim-

portant that they could be brought forward at the first conference.

The ambassadors added that the French army was now only two days distant from Rome, and that in the evening of the day after next Charles would probably arrive in person to demand an answer from His Holiness.

It was useless to think of parleying with a prince who acted in such expeditious fashion as this. Alexander accordingly warned Ferdinand to quit Rome as soon as possible, in the interests of his own personal safety. But Ferdinand refused to listen to a word, and declared that he would not go out at one gate while Charles VIII came in at another. His sojourn was not long. Two days later, about eleven o'clock in the morning, a sentinel placed on a watch-tower at the top of the Castle S. Angelo, whither the pope had retired, cried out that the vanguard of the enemy was visible on the horizon. At once Alexander and the Duke of Calabria went up on the terrace which tops the fortress, and assured themselves with their own eyes that what the soldier said was true. Then, and not till then, did the duke of Calabria mount on horseback, and, to use his own words, went out at the gate of San Sebastiano at the same moment that the French vanguard halted five hundred feet from the Gate of the People. This was on the 31st of December 1494.

At three in the afternoon the whole army had arrived, and the vanguard began their march, drums beating, ensigns unfurled. It was composed, says Paolo Giove, an eye-witness (book ii, p. 41 of his History), of Swiss and German soldiers, with short tight coats of various colours: they were armed with short swords, with steel edges like those of the ancient Romans, and carried ashen lances ten feet long, with straight and sharp iron spikes: only one-fourth of their number bore halberts instead of lances, the spikes cut into the form of an axe and surmounted by a four-cornered spike, to be used both for cutting like an axe and piercing like a bayonet: the first row of each battalion wore helmets and cuirasses which protected the head and chest, and when the men were drawn up for battle they presented to the enemy a triple array of iron spikes, which they could raise or lower like the spines of a porcupine. To each thousand of the soldiery were attached a hundred fusiliers: their officers, to distinguish them from the men, wore lofty plumes on their helmets.

After the Swiss infantry came the archers of Gascony: there were five thousand of them, wearing a very simple dress, that contrasted with the rich costume of the Swiss soldiers, the shortest of whom would have been a head higher than the tallest of the Gascons. But they were excellent soldiers, full of

courage, very light, and with a special reputation for quickness in stringing and drawing their iron bows.

Behind them rode the cavalry, the flower of the French nobility, with their gilded helmets and neck-bands, their velvet and silk surcoats, their swords each of which had its own name, their shields each telling of territorial estates, and their colours each telling of a lady-love. Besides defensive arms, each man bore a lance in his hand, like an Italian gendarme, with a solid grooved end, and on his saddle-bow a quantity of weapons, some for cutting and some for thrusting. Their horses were large and strong, but they had their tails and ears cropped according to the French custom. These horses, unlike those of the Italian gendarmes, wore no caparisons of dressed leather, which made them more exposed to attack. Every knight was followed by three horses—the first ridden by a page in armour like his own, the two others by equerries who were called lateral auxiliaries, because in a fray they fought to right and left of their chief. This troop was not only the most magnificent, but the most considerable in the whole army; for as there were 2500 knights, they formed each with their three followers a total of 10,000 men. Five thousand light horse rode next, who carried huge wooden bows, and shot long arrows from a distance like English archers. They were a great help in battle, for moving

rapidly wherever aid was required, they could fly in a moment from one wing to another, from the rear to the van, then when their quivers were empty could go off at so swift a gallop that neither infantry or heavy cavalry could pursue them. Their defensive armour consisted of a helmet and half-cuirass; some of them carried a short lance as well, with which to pin their stricken foe to the ground; they all wore long cloaks adorned with shoulder-knots, and plates of silver whereon the arms of their chief were emblazoned.

At last came the young king's escort; there were four hundred archers, among whom a hundred Scots formed a line on each side, while two hundred of the most illustrious knights marched on foot beside the prince, carrying heavy arms on their shoulders. In the midst of this magnificent escort advanced Charles VIII, both he and his horse covered with splendid armour; on his right and left marched Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the Duke of Milan's brother, and Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, of whom we have spoken so often, who was afterwards Pope Julius II. The Cardinals Colonna and Savelli followed immediately after, and behind them came Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, and all the Italian princes and generals who had thrown in their lot with the conqueror, and were marching intermingled with the great French lords.

For a long time the crowd that had collected to see all these foreign soldiers go by, a sight so new and strange, listened uneasily to a dull sound which got nearer and nearer. The earth visibly trembled, the glass shook in the windows, and behind the king's escort thirty-six bronze cannons were seen to advance, bumping along as they lay on their gun-carriages. These cannons were eight feet in length; and as their mouths were large enough to hold a man's head, it was supposed that each of these terrible machines, scarcely known as yet to the Italians, weighed nearly six thousand pounds. After the cannons came culverins sixteen feet long, and then falconets, the smallest of which shot balls the size of a grenade. This formidable artillery brought up the rear of the procession, and formed the hindmost guard of the French army.

It was six hours since the front guard entered the town; and as it was now night and for every six artillery-men there was a torch-bearer, this illumination gave to the objects around a more gloomy character than they would have shown in the sunlight. The young king was to take up his quarters in the Palazzo di Venezia, and all the artillery was directed towards the plaza and the neighbouring streets. The remainder of the army was dispersed about the town. The same evening, they brought to the king, less to do honour to him than to assure him of his

safety, the keys of Rome and the keys of the Belvedere Garden. Just the same thing had been done for the Duke of Calabria.

The pope, as we said, had retired to the Castle S. Angelo with only six cardinals, so from the day after his arrival the young king had around him a court of very different brilliance from that of the head of the Church. Then arose anew the question of a convocation to prove Alexander's simony and proceed to depose him; but the king's chief counsellors, gained over, as we know, pointed out that this was a bad moment to excite a new schism in the Church, just when preparations were being made for war against the infidels. As this was also the king's private opinion, there was not much trouble in persuading him, and he made up his mind to treat with His Holiness.

But the negotiations had scarcely begun when they had to be broken off; for the first thing Charles VIII demanded was the surrender of the Castle S. Angelo, and as the pope saw in this castle his only refuge, it was the last thing he chose to give up. Twice, in his youthful impatience, Charles wanted to take by force what he could not get by goodwill, and had his cannons directed towards the Holy Father's dwelling-place; bu the pope was unmoved by these demonstrations; and obstinate as he was, this time it was the French king who gave way.

This article, therefore, was set aside, and the following conditions were agreed upon:—

That there should be from this day forward between His Majesty the King of France and the Holy Father a sincere friendship and a firm alliance;

Before the completion of the conquest of the kingdom of Naples, the King of France should occupy, for the advantage and accommodation of his army, the fortresses of Cività Vecchia, Terracina, and Spoleto;

Lastly, the Cardinal Valentino (this was now the name of Cæsar Borgia, after his archbishopric of Valencia) should accompany the king in the capacity of apostolic ambassador, really as a hostage.

These conditions fixed, the ceremonial of an interview was arranged. The king left the Palazzo di Venezia and went to live in the Vatican. At the appointed time he entered by the door of a garden that adjoined the palace, while the pope, who had not had to quit the Castle S. Angelo, thanks to a corridor communicating between the two palaces, came down into the same garden by another gate. The result of this arrangement was that the king the next moment perceived the pope, and knelt down, but the pope pretended not to see him, and the king advancing a few paces, knelt a second time; as His Holiness was at that moment screened by some masonry, this supplied him with another excuse, and

the king went on with the performance, got up again, once more advanced several steps, and was on the point of kneeling down the third time face to face, when the Holy Father at last perceived him, and, walking towards him as though he would prevent him from kneeling, took off his own hat, and pressing him to his heart, raised him up and tenderly kissed his forehead, refusing to cover until the king had put his cap upon his head, with the aid of the pope's own hands. Then, after they had stood for a moment, exchanging polite and friendly speeches, the king lost no time in praying His Holiness to be so good as to receive into the Sacred College William Briçonnet, the Bishop of St. Malo. As this matter had been agreed upon beforehand by that prelate and His Holiness, though the king was not aware of it, Alexander was pleased to get credit by promptly granting the request; and he instantly ordered one of his attendants to go to the house of his son, Cardinal Valentino, and fetch a cape and hat. Then taking the king by the hand, he conducted him into the hall of Papagalli, where the ceremony was to take place of the admission of the new cardinal. The solemn oath of obedience which was to be taken by Charles to His Holiness as supreme head of the Christian Church was postponed till the following day.

When that solemn day arrived, every person im-

portant in Rome, noble, cleric, or soldier, assembled around His Holiness. Charles, on his side, made his approach to the Vatican with a splendid following of princes, prelates, and captains. At the threshold of the palace he found four cardinals who had arrived before him: two of them placed themselves one on each side of him, the two others behind him, and all his retinue following, they traversed a long line of apartments full of guards and servants, and at last arrived in the reception-room, where the pope was seated on his throne, with his son, Cæsar Borgia, behind him. On his arrival at the door, the King of France began the usual ceremonial, and when he had gone on from genuflexions to kissing the feet, the hand, and the forehead, he stood up, while the first president of the Parliament of Paris, in his turn stepping forward, said in a loud voice—

"Very Holy Father, behold my king ready to offer to your Holiness that oath of obedience that he owes to you; but in France it is customary that he who offers himself as vassal to his lord shall receive in exchange therefor such boons as he may demand. His Majesty, therefore, while he pledges himself for his own part to behave unto your Holiness with a munificence even greater than that wherewith your Holiness shall behave unto him, is here to beg urgently that you accord him three favours. These favours are: first, the confirmation of privi-

leges already granted to the king, to the queen his wife, and to the dauphin his son; secondly, the investiture, for himself and his successors, of the kingdom of Naples; lastly, the surrender to him of the person of the sultan D'jem, brother of the Turkish emperor."

At this address the pope was for a moment stupefied; for he did not expect these three demands, which were moreover made so publicly by Charles that no manner of refusal was possible. But quickly recovering his presence of mind, he replied to the king that he would willingly confirm the privileges that had been accorded to the house of France by his predecessors; that he might therefore consider his first demand granted; that the investiture of the kingdom was an affair that required deliberation in a council of cardinals, but he would do all he possibly could to induce them to accede to the king's desire; lastly, he must defer the affair of the sultan's brother till a time more opportune for discussing it with the Sacred College, but would venture to say that, as this surrender could not fail to be for the good of Christendom, as it was demanded for the purpose of assuring further the success of a crusade, it would not be his fault if on this point also the king should not be satisfied.

At this reply, Charles bowed his head in sign of satisfaction, and the first president stood up,

uncovered, and resumed his discourse as follows:—

"Very Holy Father, it is an ancient custom among Christian kings, especially the Most Christian kings of France, to signify, through their ambassadors, the respect they feel for the Holy See and the sovereign pontiffs whom Divine Providence places thereon; but the Most Christian king, having felt a desire to visit the tombs of the holy apostles, has been pleased to pay this religious debt, which he regards as a sacred duty, not by ambassadors or by delegates, but in his own person. This is why, Very Holy Father, His Majesty the King of France is here to acknowledge you as the true vicar of Christ, the legitimate successor of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and with promise and vow renders you that filial and respectful devotion which the kings his predecessors have been accustomed to promise and vow, devoting himself and all his strength to the service of your Holiness and the interests of the Holy See."

The pope arose with a joyful heart; for this oath, so publicly made, removed all his fears about a council; so inclined from this moment to yield to the King of France anything he might choose to ask, he took him by his left hand and made him a short and friendly reply, dubbing him the Church's eldest son. The ceremony over, they left the hall, the pope always holding the king's hand in his, and in this way

they walked as far as the room where the sacred vestments are put off; the pope feigned a wish to conduct the king to his own apartments, but the king would not suffer this, and, embracing once more, they separated, each to retire to his own domicile.

The king remained eight days longer at the Vatican, then returned to the Palazzo San Marco. During these eight days all his demands were debated and settled to his satisfaction. The Bishop of Mans was made cardinal; the investiture of the kingdom of Naples was promised to the conqueror; lastly, it was agreed that on his departure the King of France should receive from the pope's hand the brother of the Emperor of Constantinople, for a sum of 120,000 livres. But the pope, desiring to extend to the utmost the hospitality he had been bestowing, invited D'jem to dinner on the very day that he was to leave Rome with his new protector.

When the moment of departure arrived, Charles mounted his horse in full armour, and with a numerous and brilliant following made his way to the Vatican; arrived at the door, he dismounted, and leaving his escort at the Piazza of St. Peter, went up with a few gentlemen only. He found His Holiness waiting for him, with Cardinal Valentino on his right, and on his left D'jem, who, as we said before, was dining with him, and round the table thirteen cardinals. The king at once, bending on his knee,

demanded the pope's benediction, and stooped to kiss his feet. But this Alexander would not suffer; he took him in his arms, and with the lips of a father and heart of an enemy, kissed him tenderly on his forehead. Then the pope introduced the son of Mahomet II, who was a fine young man, with something noble and regal in his air, presenting in his magnificent oriental costume a great contrast in its fashion and amplitude to the narrow, severe cut of the Christian apparel. D'jem advanced to Charles without humility and without pride, and, like an emperor's son treating with a king, kissed his hand and then his shoulder; then, turning towards the Holy Father, he said in Italian, which he spoke very well, that he entreated he would recommend him to the young king, who was prepared to take him under his protection, assuring the pontiff that he should never have to repent giving him his liberty, and telling Charles that he hoped he might some day be proud of him, if after taking Naples he carried out his intention of going on to Greece. These words were spoken with so much dignity and at the same time with such gentleness, that the King of France loyally and frankly grasped the young sultan's hand, as though he were his companion-in-arms. Then Charles took a final farewell of the pope, and went down to the piazza. There he was awaited by Cardinal Valentino, who was about to accompany him, as

we know, as a hostage, and who had remained behind to exchange a few words with his father. In a moment Cæsar Borgia appeared, riding on a splendidly harnessed mule, and behind him were led six magnificent horses, a present from the Holy Father to the King of France. Charles at once mounted one of these, to do honour to the gift the pope had just conferred on him, and leaving Rome with the rest of his troops, pursued his way towards Marino, where he arrived the same evening.

He learned there that Alfonso, belying his reputation as a clever politician and great general, had just embarked with all his treasures in a flotilla of four galleys, leaving the care of the war and the management of his kingdom to his son Ferdinand. Thus everything went well for the triumphant march of Charles: the gates of towns opened of themselves at his approach, his enemies fled without waiting for his coming, and before he had fought a single battle he had won for himself the surname of Conqueror.

The day after at dawn the army started once more, and after marching the whole day, stopped in the evening at Velletri. There the king, who had been on horseback since the morning, with Cardinal Valentino and D'jem, left the former at his lodging, and taking D'jem with him, went on to his own. Then Cæsar Borgia, who among the army baggage had twenty very heavy waggons of his own, had

one of these opened, took out a splendid cabinet with the silver necessary for his table, and gave orders for his supper to be prepared, as he had done the night before. Meanwhile, night had come on, and he shut himself up in a private chamber, where, stripping off his cardinal's costume, he put on a groom's dress. Thanks to this disguise, he issued from the house that had been assigned for his accommodation without being recognised, traversed the streets, passed through the gates, and gained the open country. Nearly half a league outside the town, a servant awaited him with two swift horses. Cæsar, who was an excellent rider, sprang to the saddle, and he and his companion at full gallop retraced the road to Rome, where they arrived at break of day. Cæsar got down at the house of one Flores, auditor of the *rota,* where he procured a fresh horse and suitable clothes; then he flew at once to his mother, who gave a cry of joy when she saw him; for so silent and mysterious was the cardinal for all the world beside, and even for her, that he had not said a word of his early return to Rome. The cry of joy uttered by Rosa Vanozza when she beheld her son was far more a cry of vengeance than of love. One evening, while everybody was at the rejoicings in the Vatican, when Charles VIII and Alexander VI were swearing a friendship which neither of them felt, and exchang-

ing oaths that were broken beforehand, a messenger from Rosa Vanozza had arrived with a letter to Cæsar, in which she begged him to come at once to her house in the Via della Longara. Cæsar questioned the messenger, but he only replied that he could tell him nothing, that he would learn all he cared to know from his mother's own lips. So, as soon as he was at liberty, Cæsar, in layman's dress and wrapped in a large cloak, quitted the Vatican and made his way towards the church of Regina Cœli, in the neighbourhood of which, it will be remembered, was the house where the pope's mistress lived.

As he approached his mother's house, Cæsar began to observe the signs of strange devastation. The street was scattered with the wreck of furniture and strips of precious stuffs. As he arrived at the foot of the little flight of steps that led to the entrance gate, he saw that the windows were broken and the remains of torn curtains were fluttering in front of them. Not understanding what this disorder could mean, he rushed into the house and through several deserted and wrecked apartments. At last, seeing light in one of the rooms, he went in, and there found his mother sitting on the remains of a chest made of ebony all inlaid with ivory and silver. When she saw Cæsar, she rose, pale and dishevelled,

and pointing to the desolation around her, exclaimed—

"Look, Cæsar; behold the work of your new friends."

"But what does it mean, mother?" asked the cardinal. "Whence comes all this disorder?"

"From the serpent," replied Rosa Vanozza, gnashing her teeth,—"from the serpent you have warmed in your bosom. He has bitten me, fearing no doubt that his teeth would be broken on you."

"Who has done this?" cried Cæsar. "Tell me, and, by Heaven, mother, he shall pay, and pay indeed!"

"Who?" replied Rosa. "King Charles VIII has done it, by the hands of his faithful allies, the Swiss. It was well known that Melchior was away, and that I was living alone with a few wretched servants; so they came and broke in the doors, as though they were taking Rome by storm, and while Cardinal Valentino was making holiday with their master, they pillaged his mother's house, loading her with insults and outrages which no Turks or Saracens could possibly have improved upon."

"Very good, very good, mother," said Cæsar; "be calm; blood shall wash out disgrace. Consider a moment; what we have lost is nothing compared with what we might lose; and my father and I,

you may be quite sure, will give you back more than they have stolen from you."

"I ask for no promises," cried Rosa; "I ask for revenge."

"My mother," said the cardinal, "you shall be avenged, or I will lose the name of son."

Having by these words reassured his mother, he took her to Lucrezia's palace, which in consequence of her marriage with Pesaro was unoccupied, and himself returned to the Vatican, giving orders that his mother's house should be refurnished more magnificently than before the disaster. These orders were punctually executed, and it was among her new luxurious surroundings, but with the same hatred in her heart, that Cæsar on this occasion found his mother. This feeling prompted her cry of joy when she saw him once more.

The mother and son exchanged a very few words; then Cæsar, mounting on horseback, went to the Vatican, whence as a hostage he had departed two days before. Alexander, who knew of the flight beforehand, and not only approved, but as sovereign pontiff had previously absolved his son of the perjury he was about to commit, received him joyfully, but all the same advised him to lie concealed, as Charles in all probability would not be slow to reclaim his hostage.

Indeed, the next day, when the king got up, the

absence of Cardinal Valentino was observed, and as Charles was uneasy at not seeing him, he sent to inquire what had prevented his appearance. When the messenger arrived at the house that Cæsar had left the evening before, he learned that he had gone out at nine o'clock in the evening and not returned since. He went back with this news to the king, who at once suspected that he had fled, and in the first flush of his anger let the whole army know of his perjury. The soldiers then remembered the twenty waggons, so heavily laden, from one of which the cardinal, in the sight of all, had produced such magnificent gold and silver plate; and never doubting that the cargo of the others was equally precious, they fetched them down and broke them to pieces; but inside they found nothing but stones and sand, which proved to the king that the flight had been planned a long time back, and incensed him doubly against the pope. So without loss of time he despatched to Rome Philippe de Bresse, afterwards Duke of Savoy, with orders to intimate to the Holy Father his displeasure at this conduct. But the pope replied that he knew nothing whatever about his son's flight, and expressed the sincerest regret to His Majesty, declaring that he knew nothing of his whereabouts, but was certain that he was not in Rome. As a fact, the pope was speaking the truth this time, for Cæsar had gone with Cardinal Orsino to one of his estates, and was

temporarily in hiding there. This reply was conveyed to Charles by two messengers from the pope, the Bishops of Nepi and of Sutri, and the people also sent an ambassador in their own behalf. He was Monsignore Porcari, dean of the *rota*, who was charged to communicate to the king the displeasure of the Romans when they learned of the cardinal's breach of faith. Little as Charles was disposed to content himself with empty words, he had to turn his attention to more serious affairs; so he continued his march to Naples without stopping, arriving there on Sunday, the 22nd of February, 1495.

Four days later, the unlucky D'jem, who had fallen sick at Capua, died at Castel Nuovo. When he was leaving, at the farewell banquet, Alexander had tried on his guest the poison he intended to use so often later on upon his cardinals, and whose effects he was destined to feel himself,—such is poetical justice. In this way the pope had secured a double haul; for, in his twofold speculation in this wretched young man, he had sold him alive to Charles for 120,000 livres, and sold him dead to Bajazet for 300,000 ducats.

But there was a certain delay about the second payment; for the Turkish emperor, as we remember, was not bound to pay the price of fratricide till he received the corpse, and by Charles's order the corpse had been buried at Gaeta.

When Cæsar Borgia learned the news, he rightly supposed that the king would be so busy settling himself in his new capital that he would have too much to think of to be worrying about him; so he went to Rome again, and, anxious to keep his promise to his mother, he signalised his return by a terrible vengeance.

Cardinal Valentinò had in his service a certain Spaniard whom he had made the chief of his bravoes; he was a man of five-and-thirty or forty, whose whole life had been one long rebellion against society's laws; he recoiled from no action, provided only he could get his price. This Don Michele Correglia, who earned his celebrity for bloody deeds under the name of Michelotto, was just the man Cæsar wanted; and whereas Michelotto felt an unbounded admiration for Cæsar, Cæsar had unlimited confidence in Michelotto. It was to him the cardinal entrusted the execution of one part of his vengeance; the other he kept for himself.

Don Michele received orders to scour the Campagna and cut every French throat he could find. He began his work at once; and very few days elapsed before he had obtained most satisfactory results: more than a hundred persons were robbed or assassinated, and among the last the son of Cardinal de St. Malo, who was on his way back to France, and on whom Michelotto found a sum of 3000 crowns.

For himself, Cæsar reserved the Swiss; for it was the Swiss in particular who had despoiled his mother's house. The pope had in his service about a hundred and fifty soldiers belonging to their nation, who had settled their families in Rome, and had grown rich partly by their pay and partly in the exercise of various industries. The cardinal had every one of them dismissed, with orders to quit Rome within twenty-four hours and the Roman territories within three days. The poor wretches had all collected together to obey the order, with their wives and children and baggage, on the Piazza of St. Peter, when suddenly, by Cardinal Valentino's orders, they were hemmed in on all sides by two thousand Spaniards, who began to fire on them with their guns and charge them with their sabres, while Cæsar and his mother looked down upon the carnage from a window. In this way they killed fifty or perhaps sixty; but the rest coming up, made a charge at the assassins, and then, without suffering any loss, managed to beat a retreat to a house, where they stood a siege, and made so valiant a defense that they gave the pope time—he knew nothing of the author of this butchery—to send the captain of his guard to the rescue, who, with a strong detachment, succeeded in getting nearly forty of them safely out of the town: the rest had been massacred on the piazza or killed in the house.

But this was no real and adequate revenge; for it did not touch Charles himself, the sole author of all the troubles that the pope and his family had experienced during the last year. So Cæsar soon abandoned vulgar schemes of this kind and busied himself with loftier concerns, bending all the force of his genius to restore the league of Italian princes that had been broken by the defection of Sforza, the exile of Piero dei Medici, and the defeat of Alfonso. The enterprise was more easily accomplished than the pope could have anticipated. The Venetians were very uneasy when Charles passed so near, and they trembled lest, when he was once master of Naples, he might conceive the idea of conquering the rest of Italy. Ludovico Sforza, on his side, was beginning to tremble, seeing the rapidity with which the King of France had dethroned the house of Aragon, lest he might not make much difference between his allies and his enemies. Maximilian, for his part, was only seeking an occasion to break the temporary peace which he had granted for the sake of the concession made to him. Lastly, Ferdinand and Isabella were allies of the dethroned house. And so it came about that all of them, for different reasons, felt a common fear, and were soon in agreement as to the necessity of driving out Charles VIII, not only from Naples, but from Italy, and pledged themselves to work together to this end, by every means in their

power, by negotiations, by trickery, or by actual force. The Florentines alone refused to take part in this general levy of arms, and remained faithful to their promises.

According to the articles of the treaty agreed upon by the confederates, the alliance was to last for five-and-twenty years, and had for ostensible object the upholding of the majority of the pope, and the interests of Christendom; and these preparations might well have been taken for such as would precede a crusade against the Turks, if Bajazet's ambassador had not always been present at the deliberations, although the Christian princes could not have dared for very shame to admit the sultan by name into their league. Now the confederates had to set on foot an army of 34,000 horse and 20,000 infantry, and each of them was taxed for a contingent; thus the pope was to furnish 4000 horse, Maximilian 6000, the King of Spain, the Duke of Milan, and the republic of Venice, 8000 each. Every confederate was, in addition to this, to levy and equip 4000 infantry in the six weeks following the signature of the treaty. The fleets were to be equipped by the Maritime States; but any expenses they should incur later on were to be defrayed by all in equal shares.

The formation of this league was made public on the 12th of April, 1495, Palm Sunday, and in all the Italian States, especially at Rome, was made the occa-

sion of fêtes and immense rejoicings. Almost as soon as the publicly known articles were announced the secret ones were put into execution. These obliged Ferdinand and Isabella to send a fleet of sixty galleys to Ischia, where Alfonso's son had retired, with six hundred horsemen on board and five thousand infantry, to help him to ascend the throne once more. Those troops were to be put under the command of Gonzalvo of Cordova, who had gained the reputation of the greatest general in Europe after the taking of Granada. The Venetians, with a fleet of forty galleys under the command of Antonio Grimani, were to attack all the French stations on the coast of Calabria and Naples. The Duke of Milan promised for his part to check all reinforcements as they should arrive from France, and to drive the Duke of Orleans out of Asti.

Lastly, there was Maximilian, who had promised to make invasions on the frontiers, and Bajazet, who was to help with money, ships, and soldiers either the Venetians or the Spaniards, according as he might be appealed to by Barberigo or by Ferdinand the Catholic.

This league was all the more disconcerting for Charles, because of the speedy abatement of the enthusiasm that had hailed his first appearance. What had happened to him was what generally happens to a conqueror who has more good luck than talent; in-

stead of making himself a party among the great Neapolitan and Calabrian vassals, whose roots would be embedded in the very soil, by confirming their privileges and augmenting their power, he had wounded their feelings by bestowing all the titles, offices, and fiefs on those alone who had followed him from France, so that all the important positions in the kingdom were filled by strangers.

The result was that just when the league was made known, Tropea and Amantea, which had been presented by Charles to the Seigneur de Précy, rose in revolt and hoisted the banner of Aragon; and the Spanish fleet had only to present itself at Reggio, in Calabria, for the town to throw open its gates, being more discontented with the new rule than the old; and Don Federigo, Alfonso's brother and Ferdinand's uncle, who had hitherto never quitted Brindisi, had only to appear at Tarentum to be received there as a liberator.

CHAPTER VI

CHARLES learned all this news at Naples, and, tired of his late conquests, which necessitated a labour in organisation for which he was quite unfitted, turned his eyes towards France, where victorious fêtes and rejoicings were awaiting the victor's return. So he yielded at the first breath of his advisers, and retraced his road to his kingdom, threatened, as was said, by the Germans on the north and the Spaniards on the south. Consequently, he appointed Gilbert de Montpensier, of the house of Bourbon, viceroy; d'Aubigny, of the Scotch Stuart family, lieutenant in Calabria; Etienne de Vèse, commander at Gaeta; and Don Juliano, Gabriel de Montfaucon, Guillaume de Villeneuve, George de Lilly, the bailiff of Vitry, and Graziano Guerra respectively governors of Sant' Angelo, Manfredonia, Trani, Catanzaro, Aquila, and Sulmone; then leaving behind in evidence of his claims the half of his Swiss, a party of his Gascons, eight hundred French lances, and about five hundred Italian men-at-arms, the last under the command of the prefect of Rome, Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna, and Antonio Savelli, he left Naples on the 20th of May at two o'clock in the

afternoon, to traverse the whole of the Italian peninsula with the rest of his army, consisting of eight hundred French lances, two hundred gentlemen of his guard, one hundred Italian men-at-arms, three thousand Swiss infantry, one thousand French and one thousand Gascon. He also expected to be joined by Camillo Vitelli and his brothers in Tuscany, who were to contribute two hundred and fifty men-at-arms.

A week before he left Naples, Charles had sent to Rome Monseigneur de Saint-Paul, brother of Cardinal de Luxembourg; and just as he was starting he despatched thither the new Archbishop of Lyons. They both were commissioned to assure Alexander that the King of France had the most sincere desire and the very best intention of remaining his friend. In truth, Charles wished for nothing so much as to separate the pope from the league, so as to secure him as a spiritual and temporal support; but a young king, full of fire, ambition, and courage, was not the neighbour to suit Alexander; so the latter would listen to nothing, and as the troops he had demanded from the doge and Ludovico Sforza had not been sent in sufficient number for the defense of Rome, he was content with provisioning the castle of S. Angelo, putting in a formidable garrison, and leaving Cardinal Sant' Anastasio to receive Charles VIII, while he himself withdrew with Cæsar to Orvieto.

Charles only stayed in Rome three days, utterly depressed because the pope had refused to receive him in spite of his entreaties. And in these three days, instead of listening to Giuliano della Rovere, who was advising him once more to call a council and depose the pope, he rather hoped to bring the pope round to his side by the virtuous act of restoring the citadels of Terracina and Cività Vecchia to the authorities of the Romagna, only keeping for himself Ostia, which he had promised Giuliano to give back to him. At last, when the three days had elapsed, he left Rome, and resumed his march in three columns towards Tuscany, crossed the States of the Church, and on the 13th reached Siena, where he was joined by Philippe de Commines, who had gone as ambassador extraordinary to the Venetian Republic, and now announced that the enemy had forty thousand men under arms and were preparing for battle. This news produced no other effect on the king and the gentlemen of his army than to excite their amusement beyond measure; for they had conceived such a contempt for their enemy by their easy conquest, that they could not believe that any army, however numerous, would venture to oppose their passage.

Charles, however, was forced to give way in the face of facts, when he heard at San Teranza that his vanguard, commanded by Maréchal de Gié, and

composed of six hundred lances and fifteen hundred Swiss, when it arrived at Fornovo had come face to face with the confederates, who had encamped at Guiarole. The maréchal had ordered an instant halt, and he too had pitched his tents, utilising for his defence the natural advantages of the hilly ground. When these first measures had been taken, he sent out, first, a herald to the enemy's camp to ask from Francesco di Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, generalissimo of the confederate troops, a passage for his king's army and provisions at a reasonable price; and secondly, he despatched a courier to Charles VIII, pressing him to hurry on his march with the artillery and rearguard. The confederates had given an evasive answer, for they were pondering whether they ought to jeopardise the whole Italian force in a single combat, and, putting all to the hazard, attempt to annihilate the King of France and his army together, so overwhelming the conqueror in the ruins of his ambition. The messenger found Charles busy superintending the passage of the last of his cannon over the mountain of Pontremoli. This was no easy matter, seeing that there was no sort of track, and the guns had to be lifted up and lowered by main force, and each piece needed the arms of as many as two hundred men. At last, when all the artillery had arrived without accident on the other side of the Apennines, Charles started

in hot haste for Fornovo, where he arrived with all his following on the morning of the next day.

From the top of the mountain where the Maréchal de Gié had pitched his tents, the king beheld both his own camp and the enemy's. Both were on the right bank of the Taro, and were at either end of a semicircular chain of hills resembling an amphitheatre; and the space between the two camps, a vast basin filled during the winter floods by the torrent which now only marked its boundary, was nothing but a plain covered with gravel, where all manœuvres must be equally difficult for horse and infantry. Besides, on the western slope of the hills there was a little wood which extended from the enemy's army to the French, and was in the possession of the Stradiotes, who, by help of its cover, had already engaged in several skirmishes with the French troops during the two days of halt while they were waiting for the king.

The situation was not reassuring. From the top of the mountain which overlooked Fornovo, one could get a view, as we said before, of the two camps, and could easily calculate the numerical difference between them. The French army, weakened by the establishment of garrisons in the various towns and fortresses they had won in Italy, were scarcely eight thousand strong, while the combined forces of Milan and Venice exceeded a total of

thirty-five thousand. So Charles decided to try once more the methods of conciliation, and sent Commines, who, as we know, had joined him in Tuscany, to the Venetian *provveditori,* whose acquaintance he had made when on his embassy; he having made a great impression on these men, thanks to a general high opinion of his merits. He was commissioned to tell the enemy's generals, in the name of the King of France, that his master only desired to continue his road without doing or receiving any harm; that therefore he asked to be allowed a free passage across the fair plains of Lombardy, which he could see from the heights where he now stood, stretching as far as the eye could reach, away to the foot of the Alps. Commines found the confederate army deep in discussion: the wish of the Milanese and Venetian party being to let the king go by, and not attack him; they said they were only too happy that he should leave Italy in this way, without causing any further harm; but the ambassadors of Spain and Germany took quite another view. As their masters had no troops in the army, and as all the money they had promised was already paid, they must be the gainer in either case from a battle, whichever way it went: if they won the day they would gather the fruits of victory, and if they lost they would experience nothing of the evils of defeat. This want of unanimity was the reason why the

answer to Commines was deferred until the following day, and why it was settled that on the next day he should hold another conference with a plenipotentiary to be appointed in the course of that night. The place of this conference was to be between the two armies.

The king passed the night in great uneasiness. All day the weather had threatened to turn to rain, and we have already said how rapidly the Taro could swell; the river, fordable to-day, might from to-morrow onwards prove an insurmountable obstacle; and possibly the delay had only been asked for with a view to putting the French army in a worse position. As a fact the night had scarcely come when a terrible storm arose, and so long as darkness lasted, great rumblings were heard in the Apennines, and the sky was brilliant with lightning. At break of day, however, it seemed to be getting a little calmer, though the Taro, only a streamlet the day before, had become a torrent by this time, and was rapidly rising. So at six in the morning, the king, ready armed and on horseback, summoned Commines and bade him make his way to the rendezvous that the Venetian *provveditori* had assigned. But scarcely had he contrived to give the order when loud cries were heard coming from the extreme right of the French army. The Stradiotes, under cover of the wood stretching between the two camps, had surprised an outpost,

and first cutting the soldiers' throats, were carrying off their heads in their usual way at the saddle-bow. A detachment of cavalry was sent in pursuit; but, like wild animals, they had retreated to their lair in the woods, and there disappeared.

This unexpected engagement, in all probability arranged beforehand by the Spanish and German envoys, produced on the whole army the effect of a spark applied to a train of gunpowder. Commines and the Venetian *provveditori* each tried in vain to arrest the combat on either side. Light troops, eager for a skirmish, and, in the usual fashion of those days, prompted only by that personal courage which led them on to danger, had already come to blows, rushing down into the plain as though it were an amphitheatre where they might make a fine display of arms. For a moment the young king, drawn on by example, was on the point of forgetting the responsibility of a general in his zeal as a soldier; but this first impulse was checked by Maréchal de Gié, Messire Claude de la Châtre de Guise, and M. de la Trimouille, who persuaded Charles to adopt the wiser plan, and to cross the Taro without seeking a battle, at the same time without trying to avoid it, should the enemy cross the river from their camp and attempt to block his passage. The king accordingly, following the advice of his wisest and bravest captains, thus arranged his divisions.

The first comprised the van and a body of troops whose duty it was to support them. The van consisted of three hundred and fifty men-at-arms, the best and bravest of the army, under the command of Maréchal de Gié and Jacques Trivulce; the corps following them consisted of three thousand Swiss, under the command of Engelbert de Cleves and de Lornay, the queen's grand equerry; next came three hundred archers of the guard, whom the king had sent to help the cavalry by fighting in the spaces between them.

The second division, commanded by the king in person and forming the middle of the army, was composed of the artillery, under Jean de Lagrange, a hundred gentlemen of the guard with Gilles Carrone for standard-bearer, pensioners of the king's household under Aymar de Prie, some Scots, and two hundred crossbowmen on horseback, with French archers besides, led by M. de Crussol.

Lastly, the third division, *i.e.* the rear, preceded by six thousand beasts of burden bearing the baggage, was composed of only three hundred men-at-arms, commanded by de Guise and by de la Trimouille: this was the weakest part of the army.

When this arrangement was settled, Charles ordered the van to cross the river, just at the little town of Fornovo. This was done at once, the riders

getting wet up to their knees, and the footmen holding to the horses' tails. As soon as he saw the last soldiers of his first division on the opposite bank, he started himself to follow the same road and cross at the same ford, giving orders to de Guise and de la Trimouille to regulate the march of the rear guard by that of the centre, just as he had regulated their march by that of the van. His orders were punctually carried out; and about ten o'clock in the morning the whole French army was on the left bank of the Taro: at the same time, when it seemed certain from the enemy's arrangements that battle was imminent, the baggage, led by the captain, Odet de Reberac, was separated from the rear guard, and retired to the extreme left.

Now, Francisco de Gonzaga, general-in-chief of the confederate troops, had modelled his plans on those of the King of France; by his orders, Count de Cajazzo, with four hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry, had crossed the Taro where the Venetian camp lay, and was to attack the French van; while Gonzaga himself, following the right bank as far as Fornovo, would go over the river by the same ford that Charles had used, with a view to attacking his rear. Lastly, he had placed the Stradiotes between these two fords, with orders to cross the river in their turn, so soon as they saw the French army attacked both in van and in the rear,

and to fall upon its flank. Not content with offensive measures, Gonzaga had also made provision for retreat by leaving three reserve corps on the right bank, one to guard the camp under the instruction of the Venetian *provveditori,* and the other two arranged in echelon to support each other, the first commanded by Antonio di Montefeltro, the second by Annibale Bentivoglio.

Charles had observed all these arrangements, and had recognised the cunning Italian strategy which made his opponents the finest generals in the world; but as there was no means of avoiding the danger, he had decided to take a sideway course, and had given orders to continue the march; but in a minute the French army was caught between Count di Cajazzo, barring the way with his four hundred men-at-arms and his two thousand infantry, and Gonzaga in pursuit of the rear, as we said before, leading six hundred men-at-arms, the flower of his army, a squadron of Stradiotes, and more than five thousand infantry: this division alone was stronger than the whole of the French army.

When, however, M. de Guise and M. de la Trimouille found themselves pressed in this way, they ordered their two hundred men-at-arms to turn right about face, while at the opposite end—that is, at the head of the army—Maréchal de Gié and Trivulce ordered a halt and lances in rest. Mean-

while, according to custom, the king, who, as we said, was in the centre, was conferring knighthood on those gentlemen who had earned the favour either by virtue of their personal powers or the king's special friendship.

Suddenly there was heard a terrible clash behind: it was the French rearguard coming to blows with the Marquis of Mantua. In this encounter, where each man had singled out his own foe as though it were a tournament, very many lances were broken, especially those of the Italian knights; for their lances were hollowed so as to be less heavy, and in consequence had less solidity. Those who were thus disarmed at once seized their swords. As they were far more numerous than the French, the king saw them suddenly outflanking his right wing and apparently prepared to surround it; at the same moment loud cries were heard from a direction facing the centre: this meant that the Stradiotes were crossing the river to make their attack.

The king at once ordered his division into two detachments, and giving one to Bourbon the bastard, to make head against the Stradiotes, he hurried with the second to the rescue of the van, flinging himself into the very midst of the mêlée, striking out like a king, and doing as steady work as the lowest in rank of his captains. Aided by the reinforcement, the rearguard made a good stand, though the enemy

were five against one, and the combat in this part continued to rage with wonderful fury.

Obeying his orders, Bourbon had thrown himself upon the Stradiotes; but unfortunately, carried off by his horse, he had penetrated so far into the enemy's ranks that he was lost to sight: the disappearance of their chief, the strange dress of their new antagonists, and the peculiar method of their fighting produced a considerable effect on those who were to attack them; and for the moment disorder was the consequence in the centre, and the horsemen scattered instead of serrying their ranks and fighting in a body. This false move would have done them serious harm, had not most of the Stradiotes, seeing the baggage alone and undefended, rushed after that in hope of booty, instead of following up their advantage. A great part of the troop nevertheless stayed behind to fight, pressing on the French cavalry and smashing their lances with their fearful scimitars. Happily the king, who had just repulsed the Marquis of Mantua's attack, perceived what was going on behind him, and riding back at all possible speed to the succour of the centre, together with the gentlemen of his household fell upon the Stradiotes, no longer armed with a lance, for that he had just broken, but brandishing his long sword, which blazed about him like lightning, and—either because he was whirled away like Bourbon by his

own horse, or because he had allowed his courage to take him too far—he suddenly found himself in the thickest ranks of the Stradiotes, accompanied only by eight of the knights he had just now created, one equerry called Antoine des Ambus, and his standard-bearer. "France, France!" he cried aloud, to rally round him all the others who had scattered; they, seeing at last that the danger was less than they had supposed, began to take their revenge and to pay back with interest the blows they had received from the Stradiotes. Things were going still better for the van, which the Marquis de Cajazzo was to attack; for although he had at first appeared to be animated with a terrible purpose, he stopped short about ten or twelve feet from the French line and turned right about face without breaking a single lance. The French wanted to pursue, but the Maréchal de Gié, fearing that this flight might be only a trick to draw off the vanguard from the centre, ordered every man to stay in his place. But the Swiss, who were German, and did not understand the order, or thought it was not meant for them, followed upon their heels, and although on foot caught them up and killed a hundred of them. This was quite enough to throw them into disorder, so that some were scattered about the plain, and others made a rush for the water, so as to cross the river and rejoin their camp.

When the Maréchal de Gié saw this, he detached a hundred of his own men to go to the aid of the king, who was continuing to fight with unheard-of courage and running the greatest risks, constantly separated as he was from his gentlemen, who could not follow him; for wherever there was danger, thither he rushed, with his cry of "France," little troubling himself as to whether he was followed or not. And it was no longer with his sword that he fought; that he had long ago broken, like his lance, but with a heavy battle-axe, whose every blow was mortal whether cut or pierced. Thus the Stradiotes, already hard pressed by the king's household and his pensioners, soon changed attack for defence and defence for flight. It was at this moment that the king was really in the greatest danger; for he had let himself be carried away in pursuit of the fugitives, and presently found himself all alone, surrounded by these men, who, had they not been struck with a mighty terror, would have had nothing to do but unite and crush him and his horse together; but, as Commines remarks, "He whom God guards is well guarded, and God was guarding the King of France."

All the same, at this moment the French were sorely pressed in the rear; and although de Guise and de la Trimouille held out as firmly as it was possible to hold, they would probably have been compelled to yield to superior numbers had not a double aid ar-

rived in time: first the indefatigable Charles, who, having nothing more to do among the fugitives, once again dashed into the midst of the fight, next the servants of the army, who, now that they were set free from the Stradiotes and saw their enemies put to flight, ran up armed with the axes they habitually used to cut down wood for building their huts: they burst into the middle of the fray, slashing at the horses' legs and dealing heavy blows that smashed in the visors of the dismounted horsemen.

The Italians could not hold out against this double attack; the *furia francese* rendered all their strategy and all their calculations useless, especially as for more than a century they had abandoned their fights of blood and fury for a kind of tournament they chose to regard as warfare; so, in spite of all Gonzaga's efforts, they turned their backs upon the French rear and took to flight; in the greatest haste and with much difficulty they recrossed the torrent, which was swollen even more now by the rain that had been falling during the whole time of the battle.

Some thought fit to pursue the vanquished, for there was now such disorder in their ranks that they were fleeing in all directions from the battlefield where the French had gained so glorious a victory, blocking up the roads to Parma and Bercetto. But Maréchal de Gié and de Guise and de la Trimouille, who had done quite enough to save them from the

suspicion of quailing before imaginary dangers, put a stop to this enthusiasm, by pointing out that it would only be risking the loss of their present advantage if they tried to push it farther with men and horses so worn out. This view was adopted in spite of the opinion of Trivulce, Camillo Vitelli, and Francesco Secco, who were all eager to follow up the victory.

The king retired to a little village on the left bank of the Taro, and took shelter in a poor house. There he disarmed, being perhaps among all the captains and all the soldiers the man who had fought best.

During the night the torrent swelled so high that the Italian army could not have pursued, even if they had laid aside their fears. The king did not propose to give the appearance of flight after a victory, and therefore kept his army drawn up all day, and at night went on to sleep at Medesano, a little village only a mile lower down than the hamlet where he rested after the fight. But in the course of the night he reflected that he had done enough for the honour of his arms in fighting an army four times as great as his own and killing three thousand men, and then waiting a day and a half to give them time to take their revenge; so two hours before daybreak he had the fires lighted, that the enemy might suppose he was remaining in camp; and every man mounting noiselessly, the whole French army, almost

out of danger by this time, proceeded on their march to Borgo San Donnino.

While this was going on, the pope returned to Rome, where news highly favourable to his schemes was not slow to reach his ears. He learned that Ferdinand had crossed from Sicily into Calabria with six thousand volunteers and a considerable number of Spanish horse and foot, led, at the command of Ferdinand and Isabella, by the famous Gonzalva de Cordova, who arrived in Italy with a great reputation, destined to suffer somewhat from the defeat at Seminara. At almost the same time the French fleet had been beaten by the Aragonese; moreover, the battle of the Taro, though a complete defeat for the confederates, was another victory for the pope, because its result was to open a return to France for that man whom he regarded as his deadliest foe. So, feeling that he had nothing more to fear from Charles, he sent him a brief at Turin, where he had stopped for a short time to give aid to Novara, therein commanding him, by virtue of his pontifical authority, to depart out of Italy with his army, and to recall within ten days those of his troops that still remained in the kingdom of Naples, on pain of excommunication, and a summons to appear before him in person.

Charles VIII replied—

(1) That he did not understand how the pope,

the chief of the league, ordered him to leave Italy, whereas the confederates had not only refused him a passage, but had even attempted, though unsuccessfully, as perhaps His Holiness knew, to cut off his return into France;

(2) That, as to recalling his troops from Naples, he was not so irreligious as to do that, since they had not entered the kingdom without the consent and blessing of His Holiness;

(3) That he was exceedingly surprised that the pope should require his presence in person at the capital of the Christian world just at the present time, when six weeks previously, at the time of his return from Naples, although he ardently desired an interview with His Holiness, that he might offer proofs of his respect and obedience, His Holiness, instead of according this favour, had quitted Rome so hastily on his approach that he had not been able to come up with him by any efforts whatsoever. On this point, however, he promised to give His Holiness the satisfaction he desired, if he would engage this time to wait for him: he would therefore return to Rome so soon as the affairs that brought him back to his own kingdom had been satisfactorily settled.

Although in this reply there was a touch of mockery and defiance, Charles was none the less compelled by the circumstances of the case to obey the pope's

strange brief. His presence was so much needed in France that, in spite of the arrival of a Swiss reinforcement, he was compelled to conclude a peace with Ludovico Sforza, whereby he yielded Novara to him; while Gilbert de Montpensier and d'Aubigny, after defending, inch by inch, Calabria, the Basilicate, and Naples, were obliged to sign the capitulation of Atella, after a siege of thirty-two days, on the 20th of July, 1496. This involved giving back to Ferdinand II, King of Naples, all the palaces and fortresses of his kingdom; which indeed he did but enjoy for three months, dying of exhaustion on the 7th of September following, at the Castello della Somma, at the foot of Vesuvius; all the attentions lavished upon him by his young wife could not repair the evil that her beauty had wrought.

His uncle Frederic succeeded; and so, in the three years of his papacy, Alexander VI had seen five kings upon the throne of Naples, while he was establishing himself more firmly upon his own pontifical seat—Ferdinand I, Alfonso I, Charles VIII, Ferdinand II, and Frederic. All this agitation about his throne, this rapid succession of sovereigns, was the best thing possible for Alexander; for each new monarch became actually king only on condition of his receiving the pontifical investiture. The consequence was that Alexander was the only gainer in power and credit by these changes; for the Duke of Milan and

the republics of Florence and Venice had successively recognised him as supreme head of the Church, in spite of his simony; moreover, the five kings of Naples had in turn paid him homage. So he thought the time had now come for founding a mighty family; and for this he relied upon the Duke of Gandia, who was to hold all the highest temporal dignities; and upon Cæsar Borgia, who was to be appointed to all the great ecclesiastical offices. The pope made sure of the success of these new projects by electing four Spanish cardinals, who brought up the number of his compatriots in the Sacred College to twenty-two, thus assuring him a constant and certain majority.

The first requirement of the pope's policy was to clear away from the neighbourhood of Rome all those petty lords whom most people call vicars of the Church, but whom Alexander called the shackles of the papacy. We saw that he had already begun this work by rousing the Orsini against the Colonna family, when Charles VIII's enterprise compelled him to concentrate all his mental resources, and also the forces of his States, so as to secure his own personal safety.

It had come about through their own imprudent action that the Orsini, the pope's old friends, were now in the pay of the French, and had entered the kingdom of Naples with them, where one of them,

Virginio, a very important member of their powerful house, had been taken prisoner during the war, and was Ferdinand II's captive. Alexander could not let this opportunity escape him; so, first ordering the King of Naples not to release a man who, ever since the 1st of June, 1496, had been a declared rebel, he pronounced a sentence of confiscation against Virginio Orsini and his whole family in a secret consistory, which sat on the 26th of October following—that is to say, in the early days of the reign of Frederic, whom he knew to be entirely at his command, owing to the King's great desire of getting the investiture from him; then, as it was not enough to declare the goods confiscated, without also dispossessing the owners, he made overtures to the Colonna family, saying he would commission them, in proof of their new bond of friendship, to execute the order given against their old enemies under the direction of his son Francesco, Duke of Gandia. In this fashion he contrived to weaken his neighbours each by means of the other, till such time as he could safely attack and put an end to conquered and conqueror alike.

The Colonna family accepted this proposition, and the Duke of Gandia was named General of the Church: his father in his pontifical robes bestowed on him the insignia of this office in the church of St. Peter's at Rome.

CHAPTER VII

MATTERS went forward as Alexander had wished, and before the end of the year the pontifical army had seized a great number of castles and fortresses that belonged to the Orsini, who thought themselves already lost when Charles VIII came to the rescue. They had addressed themselves to him without much hope that he could be of real use to them, with his want of armed troops and his preoccupation with his own affairs. He, however, sent Carlo Orsini, son of Virginio, the prisoner, and Vitellozzo Vitelli, brother of Camillo Vitelli, one of the three valiant Italian condottieri who had joined him and fought for him at the crossing of the Taro. These two captains, whose courage and skill were well known, brought with them a considerable sum of money from the liberal coffers of Charles VIII. Now, scarcely had they arrived at Città di Castello, the centre of their little sovereignty, and expressed their intention of raising a band of soldiers, when men presented themselves from all sides to fight under their banner; so they very soon assembled a small army, and as they had been able during their stay among the French to study those matters of

military organisation in which France excelled, they now applied the result of their learning to their own troops: the improvements were mainly certain changes in the artillery which made their manœuvres easier, and the substitution for their ordinary weapons of pikes similar in form to the Swiss pikes, but two feet longer. These changes effected, Vitellozzo Vitelli spent three or four months in exercising his men in the management of their new weapons; then, when he thought them fit to make good use of these, and when he had collected more or less help from the towns of Perugia, Todi, and Narni, where the inhabitants trembled lest their turn should come after the Orsini's, as the Orsini's had followed on the Colonnas', he marched towards Bracciano, which was being besieged by the Duke of Urbino, who had been lent to the pope by the Venetians, in virtue of the treaty quoted above.

The Venetian general, when he heard of Vitelli's approach, thought he might as well spare him half his journey, and marched out to confront him: the two armies met in the Soriano road, and the battle straightway began. The pontifical army had a body of eight hundred Germans, on which the Dukes of Urbino and Gandia chiefly relied, as well they might, for they were the best troops in the world; but Vitelli attacked these picked men with his infantry, who, armed with their formidable pikes, ran them through,

while they with arms four feet shorter had no chance even of returning the blows they received; at the same time Vitelli's light troops wheeled upon the flank, following their most rapid movements, and silencing the enemy's artillery by the swiftness and accuracy of their attack. The pontifical troops were put to flight, though after a longer resistance than might have been expected when they had to sustain the attack of an army so much better equipped than their own; with them they bore to Ronciglione the Duke of Gandia, wounded in the face by a pike-thrust, Fabrizio Colonna, and the envoy; the Duke of Urbino, who was fighting in the rear to aid the retreat, was taken prisoner with all his artillery and the baggage of the conquered army. But this success, great as it was, did not so swell the pride of Vitellozzo Vitelli as to make him oblivious of his position. He knew that he and the Orsini together were too weak to sustain a war of such magnitude; that the little store of money to which he owed the existence of his army would very soon be expended and his army would disappear with it. So he hastened to get pardoned for the victory by making propositions which he would very likely have refused had he been the vanquished party; and the pope accepted his conditions without demur; during the interval having heard that Trivulce had just recrossed the Alps and re-entered Italy with three thousand Swiss, and fear-

ing lest the Italian general might only be the advance guard of the King of France. So it was settled that the Orsini should pay 70,000 florins for the expenses of the war, and that all the prisoners on both sides should be exchanged without ransom with the single exception of the Duke of Urbino. As a pledge for the future payment of the 70,000 florins, the Orsini handed over to the Cardinals Sforza and San Severino the fortresses of Anguillara and Cervetri; then, when the day came and they had not the necessary money, they gave up their prisoner, the Duke of Urbino, estimating his worth at 40,000 ducats—nearly all the sum required—and handed him over to Alexander on account; he, a rigid observer of engagements, made his own general, taken prisoner in his service, pay to himself the ransom he owed to the enemy.

Then the pope had the corpse of Virginio sent to Carlo Orsini and Vitellozzo Vitelli, as he could not send him alive. By a strange fatality the prisoner had died, eight days before the treaty was signed, of the same malady—at least, if we may judge by analogy—that had carried off Bajazet's brother.

As soon as the peace was signed, Prospero Colonna and Gonzalvo de Cordova, whom the Pope had demanded from Frederic, arrived at Rome with an army of Spanish and Neapolitan troops. Alexan-

der, as he could not utilise these against the Orsini, set them the work of recapturing Ostia, not desiring to incur the reproach of bringing them to Rome for nothing. Gonzalvo was rewarded for this feat by receiving the Rose of Gold from the pope's hand—that being the highest honour His Holiness can grant. He shared this distinction with the Emperor Maximilian, the King of France, the Doge of Venice, and the Marquis of Mantua.

In the midst of all this occurred the solemn festival of the Assumption, in which Gonzalvo was invited to take part. He accordingly left his palace, proceeded in great pomp in the front of the pontifical cavalry, and took his place on the Duke of Gandia's left hand. The duke attracted all eyes by his personal beauty, set off as it was by all the luxury he thought fit to display at this festival. He had a retinue of pages and servants, clad in sumptuous liveries, incomparable for richness with anything heretofore seen in Rome, that city of religious pomp. All these pages and servants rode magnificent horses, caparisoned in velvet trimmed with silver fringe, and bells of silver hanging down every here and there. He himself was in a robe of gold brocade, and wore at his neck a string of Eastern pearls, perhaps the finest and largest that ever belonged to a Christian prince, while on his cap was a gold chain studded with diamonds of which the smallest was worth more than

20,000 ducats. This magnificence was all the more conspicuous by the contrast it presented to Cæsar's dress, whose scarlet robe admitted of no ornaments. The result was that Cæsar, doubly jealous of his brother, felt a new hatred rise up within him when he heard all along the way the praises of his fine appearance and noble equipment. From this moment Cardinal Valentino decided in his own mind the fate of this man, this constant obstacle in the path of his pride, his love, and his ambition. Very good reason, says Tommaso, the historian, had the Duke of Gandia to leave behind him an impression on the public mind of his beauty and his grandeur at this fête, for this last display was soon to be followed by the obsequies of the unhappy young man.

Lucrezia also had come to Rome, on the pretext of taking part in the solemnity, but really, as we shall see later, with the view of serving as a new instrument for her father's ambition. As the pope was not satisfied with an empty triumph of vanity and display for his son, and as his war with the Orsini had failed to produce the anticipated results, he decided to increase the fortune of his firstborn by doing the very thing which he had accused Calixtus in his speech of doing for him, viz., alienating from the States of the Church the cities of Benevento, Terracino, and Pontecorvo to form a duchy as an appanage to his son's house. Accordingly this proposition

was put forward in a full consistory, and as the college of cardinals was entirely Alexander's, there was no difficulty about carrying his point. This new favour to his elder brother exasperated Cæsar, although he was himself getting a share of the paternal gifts; for he had just been named envoy *a latere* at Frederic's court, and was appointed to crown him with his own hands as the papal representative. But Lucrezia, when she had spent a few days of pleasure with her father and brothers, had gone into retreat at the convent of San Sisto. No one knew the real motive of her seclusion, and no entreaties of Cæsar, whose love for her was strange and unnatural, had induced her to defer this departure from the world even until the day after he left for Naples. His sister's obstinacy wounded him deeply, for ever since the day when the Duke of Gandia had appeared in the procession so magnificently attired, he fancied he had observed a coldness in the mistress of his illicit affection, and so far did this increase his hatred of his rival that he resolved to be rid of him at all costs. So he ordered the chief of his sbirri to come and see him the same night.

Michelotto was accustomed to these mysterious messages, which almost always meant his help was wanted in some love affair or some act of revenge. As in either case his reward was generally a large one, he was careful to keep his engagement, and at

the appointed hour was brought into the presence of his patron.

Cæsar received him leaning against a tall chimney-piece, no longer wearing his cardinal's robe and hat, but a doublet of black velvet slashed with satin of the same colour. One hand toyed mechanically with his gloves, while the other rested on the handle of a poisoned dagger which never left his side. This was the dress he kept for his nocturnal expeditions, so Michelotto felt no surprise at that; but his eyes burned with a flame more gloomy than their wont, and his cheeks, generally pale, were now livid. Michelotto had but to cast one look upon his master to see that Cæsar and he were about to share some terrible enterprise.

He signed to him to shut the door. Michelotto obeyed. Then, after a moment's silence, during which the eyes of Borgia seemed to burn into the soul of the bravo, who with a careless air stood bare-headed before him, he said, in a voice whose slightly mocking tone gave the only sign of his emotion—

"Michelotto, how do you think this dress suits me?"

Accustomed as he was to his master's tricks of circumlocution, the bravo was so far from expecting this question, that at first he stood mute, and only after a few moments' pause was able to say—

"Admirably, monsignore; thanks to the dress,

your Excellency has the appearance as well as the true spirit of a captain."

"I am glad you think so," replied Cæsar. "And now let me ask you, do you know who is the cause that, instead of wearing this dress, which I can only put on at night, I am forced to disguise myself in the daytime in a cardinal's robe and hat, and pass my time trotting about from church to church, from consistory to consistory, when I ought properly to be leading a magnificent army in the battlefield, where you would enjoy a captain's rank, instead of being the chief of a few miserable sbirri?"

"Yes, monsignore," replied Michelotto, who had divined Cæsar's meaning at his first word; "the man who is the cause of this is Francesco, Duke of Gandia, and Benevento, your elder brother."

"Do you know," Cæsar resumed, giving no sign of assent but a nod and a bitter smile,—"do you know who has all the money and none of the genius, who has the helmet and none of the brains, who has the sword and no hand to wield it?"

"That too is the Duke of Gandia," said Michelotto.

"Do you know," continued Cæsar, "who is the man whom I find continually blocking the path of my ambition, my fortune, and my love?"

"It is the same, the Duke of Gandia," said Michelotto.

"And what do you think of it?" asked Cæsar.

"I think he must die," replied the man coldly.

"That is my opinion also, Michelotto," said Cæsar, stepping towards him and grasping his hand; "and my only regret is that I did not think of it sooner; for if I had carried a sword at my side instead of a crosier in my hand when the King of France was marching through Italy, I should now have been master of a fine domain. The pope is obviously anxious to aggrandise his family, but he is mistaken in the means he adopts: it is I who ought to have been made duke, and my brother a cardinal. There is no doubt at all that, had he made me duke, I should have contributed a daring and courage to his service that would have made his power far weightier than it is. The man who would make his way to vast dominions and a kingdom ought to trample under foot all the obstacles in his path, and boldly grasp the very sharpest thorns, whatever reluctance his weak flesh may feel; such a man, if he would open out his path to fortune, should seize his dagger or his sword and strike out with his eyes shut; he should not shrink from bathing his hands in the blood of his kindred; he should follow the example offered him by every founder of empire from Romulus to Bajazet, both of whom climbed to the throne by the ladder of fratricide. Yes, Michelotto, as you say, such is my condition, and I am resolved I will not

shrink. Now you know why I sent for you: am I wrong in counting upon you?"

As might have been expected, Michelotto, seeing his own fortune in this crime, replied that he was entirely at Cæsar's service, and that he had nothing to do but to give his orders as to time, place, and manner of execution. Cæsar replied that the time must needs be very soon, since he was on the point of leaving Rome for Naples; as to the place and the mode of execution, they would depend on circumstances, and each of them must look out for an opportunity, and seize the first that seemed favourable.

Two days after this resolution had been taken, Cæsar learned that the day of his departure was fixed for Thursday the 15th of June: at the same time he received an invitation from his mother to come to supper with her on the 14th. This was a farewell repast given in his honour. Michelotto received orders to be in readiness at eleven o'clock at night.

The table was set in the open air in a magnificent vineyard, a property of Rosa Vanozza's in the neighbourhood of San Piero-in-Vinculis: the guests were Cæsar Borgia, the hero of the occasion; the Duke of Gandia; Prince of Squillace; Doña Sancha, his wife; the Cardinal of Monte Reale, Francesco Borgia, son of Calixtus III; Don Roderigo Borgia, captain of the apostolic palace; Don Goffredo, brother

of the cardinal; Gian Borgia, at that time ambassador at Perugia; and lastly, Don Alfonso Borgia, the pope's nephew: the whole family therefore was present, except Lucrezia, who was still in retreat, and would not come.

The repast was magnificent: Cæsar was quite as cheerful as usual, and the Duke of Gandia seemed more joyous than he had ever been before.

In the middle of supper a man in a mask brought him a letter. The duke unfastened it, colouring up with pleasure; and when he had read it answered in these words, "I will come": then he quickly hid the letter in the pocket of his doublet; but quick as he was to conceal it from every eye, Cæsar had had time to cast a glance that way, and he fancied he recognised the handwriting of his sister Lucrezia. Meanwhile the messenger had gone off with his answer, no one but Cæsar paying the slightest attention to him, for at that period it was the custom for love messages to be conveyed by men in domino or by women whose faces were concealed by a veil.

At ten o'clock they rose from the table, and as the air was sweet and mild they walked about a while under the magnificent pine trees that shaded the house of Rosa Vanozza, while Cæsar never for an instant let his brother out of his sight. At eleven o'clock the Duke of Gandia bade good-night to his

mother. Cæsar at once followed suit, alleging his desire to go to the Vatican to bid farewell to the pope, as he would not be able to fulfil this duty on the morrow, his departure being fixed at daybreak. This pretext was all the more plausible since the pope was in the habit of sitting up every night till two or three o'clock in the morning.

The two brothers went out together, mounted their horses, which were waiting for them at the door, and rode side by side as far as the Palazzo Borgia, the present home of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who had taken it as a gift from Alexander the night before his election to the papacy. There the Duke of Gandia separated from his brother, saying with a smile that he was not intending to go home, as he had several hours to spend first with a fair lady who was expecting him. Cæsar replied that he was no doubt free to make any use he liked best of his opportunities, and wished him a very good night. The duke turned to the right, and Cæsar to the left; but Cæsar observed that the street the duke had taken led in the direction of the convent of San Sisto, where, as we said, Lucrezia was in retreat; his suspicions were confirmed by this observation, and he directed his horse's steps to the Vatican, found the pope, took his leave of him, and received his benediction.

From this moment all is wrapped in mystery and

darkness, like that in which the terrible deed was done that we are now to relate.

This, however, is what is believed:—

The Duke of Gandia, when he quitted Cæsar, sent away his servants, and in the company of one confidential valet alone pursued his course towards the Piazza della Giudecca. There he found the same man in a mask who had come to speak to him at supper, and forbidding his valet to follow any farther, he bade him wait on the piazza where they then stood, promising to be on his way back in two hours' time at latest, and to take him up as he passed. And at the appointed hour the duke reappeared, took leave this time of the man in the mask, and retraced his steps towards his palace. But scarcely had he turned the corner of the Jewish Ghetto, when four men on foot, led by a fifth who was on horseback, flung themselves upon him. Thinking they were thieves, or else that he was the victim of some mistake, the Duke of Gandia mentioned his name; but instead of the name checking the murderers' daggers, their strokes were redoubled, and the duke very soon fell dead, his valet dying beside him.

Then the man on horseback, who had watched the assassination with no sign of emotion, backed his horse towards the dead body: the four murderers lifted the corpse across the crupper, and walking by the side to support it, then made their way down the

lane that leads to the Church of Santa Maria-in-Monticelli. The wretched valet they left for dead upon the pavement. But he, after the lapse of a few seconds, regained some small strength, and his groans were heard by the inhabitants of a poor little house hard by; they came and picked him up, and laid him upon a bed, where he died almost at once, unable to give any evidence as to the assassins or any details of the murder.

All night the duke was expected home, and all the next morning; then expectation was turned into fear, and fear at last into deadly terror. The pope was approached, and told that the Duke of Gandia had never come back to his palace since he left his mother's house. But Alexander tried to deceive himself all through the rest of the day, hoping that his son might have been surprised by the coming of daylight in the midst of an amorous adventure, and was waiting till the next night to get away in that darkness which had aided his coming thither. But the night, like the day, passed and brought no news. On the morrow, the pope, tormented by the gloomiest presentiments and by the raven's croak of the *vox populi,* let himself fall into the depths of despair: amid sighs and sobs of grief, all he could say to any one who came to him was but these words, repeated a thousand times: "Search, search; let us know how my unhappy son has died."

Then everybody joined in the search; for, as we have said, the Duke of Gandia was beloved by all; but nothing could be discovered from scouring the town, except the body of the murdered man, who was recognised as the duke's valet; of his master there was no trace whatever: it was then thought, not without reason, that he had probably been thrown into the Tiber, and they began to follow along its banks, beginning from the Via della Ripetta, questioning every boatman and fisherman who might possibly have seen, either from their houses or from their boats, what had happened on the river banks during the two preceding nights. At first all inquiries were in vain; but when they had gone up as high as the Via del Fantanone, they found a man at last who said he had seen something happen on the night of the 14th which might very possibly have some bearing on the subject of inquiry. He was a Slav named George, who was taking up the river a boat laden with wood to Ripetta. The following are his own words:—

"Gentlemen," he said, "last Wednesday evening, when I had set down my load of wood on the bank, I remained in my boat, resting in the cool night air, and watching lest other men should come and take away what I had just unloaded, when, about two o'clock in the morning, I saw coming out of the lane on the left of San Girolamo's Church two men on

foot, who came forward into the middle of the street, and looked so carefully all around that they seemed to have come to find out if anybody was going along the street. When they felt sure that it was deserted, they went back along the same lane, whence issued presently two other men, who used similar precautions to make sure that there was nothing fresh; they, when they found all as they wished, gave a sign to their companions to come and join them; next appeared one man on a dapple-grey horse, which was carrying on the crupper the body of a dead man, his head and arms hanging over on one side and his feet on the other. The two fellows I had first seen exploring were holding him up by the arms and legs. The other three at once went up to the river, while the first two kept a watch on the street, and advancing to the part of the bank where the sewers of the town are discharged into the Tiber, the horseman turned his horse, backing on the river; then the two who were at either side taking the corpse, one by the hands, the other by the feet, swung it three times, and the third time threw it out into the river with all their strength; then at the noise made when the body splashed into the water, the horseman asked, 'Is it done?' and the others answered, 'Yes, sir,' and he at once turned right about face; but seeing the dead man's cloak floating, he asked what was that black thing swim-

ming about. 'Sir,' said one of the men, 'it is his cloak'; and then another man picked up some stones, and running to the place where it was still floating, threw them so as to make it sink under; as soon as it had quite disappeared, they went off, and after walking a little way along the main road, they went into the lane that leads to San Giacomo. That was all I saw, gentlemen, and so it is all I can answer to the questions you have asked me."

At these words, which robbed of all hope any who might yet entertain it, one of the pope's servants asked the Slav why, when he was witness of such a deed, he had not gone to denounce it to the governor. But the Slav replied that, since he had exercised his present trade on the riverside, he had seen dead men thrown into the Tiber in the same way a hundred times, and had never heard that anybody had been troubled about them; so he supposed it would be the same with this corpse as the others, and had never imagined it was his duty to speak of it, not thinking it would be any more important than it had been before.

Acting on this intelligence, the servants of His Holiness summoned at once all the boatmen and fishermen who were accustomed to go up and down the river, and as a large reward was promised to anyone who should find the duke's body, there were soon more than a hundred ready for the job; so that be-

fore the evening of the same day, which was Friday, two men were drawn out of the water, of whom one was instantly recognised as the hapless duke. At the very first glance at the body there could be no doubt as to the cause of death. It was pierced with nine wounds, the chief one in the throat, whose artery was cut. The clothing had not been touched: his doublet and cloak were there, his gloves in his waistband, gold in his purse; the duke then must have been assassinated not for gain but for revenge.

The ship which carried the corpse went up the Tiber to the Castello Sant' Angelo, where it was set down. At once the magnificent dress was fetched from the duke's palace which he had worn on the day of the procession, and he was clothed in it once more: beside him were placed the insignia of the generalship of the Church. Thus he lay in state all day, but his father in his despair had not the courage to come and look at him. At last, when night had fallen, his most trusty and honoured servants carried the body to the church of the Madonna del Popolo, with all the pomp and ceremony that Church and State combined could devise for the funeral of the son of the pope.

Meantime the bloodstained hands of Cæsar Borgia were placing a royal crown upon the head of Frederic of Aragon.

This blow had pierced Alexander's heart very

deeply. As at first he did not know on whom his suspicions should fall, he gave the strictest orders for the pursuit of the murderers; but little by little the infamous truth was forced upon him. He saw that the blow which struck at his house came from that very house itself, and then his despair was changed to madness: he ran through the rooms of the Vatican like a maniac, and entering the consistory with torn garments and ashes on his head, he sobbingly avowed all the errors of his past life, owning that the disaster that struck his offspring through his offspring was a just chastisement from God; then he retired to a secret dark chamber of the palace, and there shut himself up, declaring his resolve to die of starvation. And indeed for more than sixty hours he took no nourishment by day nor rest by night, making no answer to those who knocked at his door to bring him food except with the wailings of a woman or a roar as of a wounded lion; even the beautiful Giulia Farnese, his new mistress, could not move him at all, and was obliged to go and seek Lucrezia, that daughter doubly loved, to conquer his deadly resolve. Lucrezia came out from the retreat where she was weeping for the Duke of Gandia, that she might console her father. At her voice the door did really open, and it was only then that the Duke of Segovia, who had been kneeling almost a whole day at the threshold, begging His Holiness to take

heart, could enter with servants bearing wine and food.

The pope remained alone with Lucrezia for three days and nights; then he reappeared in public, outwardly calm, if not resigned; for Guicciardini assures us that his daughter had made him understand how dangerous it would be to himself to show too openly before the assassin, who was coming home, the immoderate love he felt for his victim.

CHAPTER VIII

CÆSAR remained at Naples, partly to give time to the paternal grief to cool down, and partly to get on with another business he had lately been charged with, nothing else than a proposition of marriage between Lucrezia and Don Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Bicelli and Prince of Salerno, natural son of Alfonso II and brother of Doña Sancha. It was true that Lucrezia was already married to the lord of Pesaro, but she was the daughter of a father who had received from Heaven the right of uniting and disuniting. There was no need to trouble about so trifling a matter: when the two were ready to marry, the divorce would be effected. Alexander was too good a tactician to leave his daughter married to a son-in-law who was becoming useless to him.

Towards the end of August it was announced that the ambassador was coming back to Rome, having accomplished his mission to the new king to his great satisfaction. And thither he returned on the 5th of September,—that is, nearly three months after the Duke of Gandia's death,—and on the next day, the 6th, from the church of Santa Maria Novella, where,

according to custom, the cardinals and the Spanish and Venetian ambassadors were awaiting him on horseback at the door, he proceeded to the Vatican, where His Holiness was sitting; there he entered the consistory, was admitted by the pope, and in accordance with the usual ceremonial received his benediction and kiss; then, accompanied once more in the same fashion by the ambassadors and cardinals, he was escorted to his own apartments. Thence he proceeded to the pope's, as soon as he was left alone; for at the consistory they had had no speech with one another, and the father and son had a hundred things to talk about, but of these the Duke of Gandia was not one, as might have been expected. His name was not once spoken, and neither on that day nor afterwards was there ever again any mention of the unhappy young man: it was as though he had never existed.

It was the fact that Cæsar brought good news. King Frederic gave his consent to the proposed union; so the marriage of Sforza and Lucrezia was dissolved on a pretext of nullity. Then Frederic authorised the exhumation of D'jem's body, which, it will be remembered, was worth 300,000 ducats.

After this, all came about as Cæsar had desired; he became the man who was all-powerful after the pope; but when he was second in command it was soon evident to the Roman people that their city was

making a new stride in the direction of ruin. There was nothing but balls, fêtes, masquerades; there were magnificent hunting parties, when Cæsar, who had begun to cast off his cardinal's robe,—weary perhaps of the colour,—appeared in a French dress, followed, like a king, by cardinals, envoys, and bodyguard. The whole pontifical town, given up like a courtesan to orgies and debauchery, had never been more the home of sedition, luxury, and carnage, according to the Cardinal of Viterbo, not even in the days of Nero and Heliogabalus. Never had she fallen upon days more evil; never had more traitors done her dishonour or sbirri stained her streets with blood. The number of thieves was so great, and their audacity such, that no one could with safety pass the gates of the town; soon it was not even safe within them. No house, no castle, availed for defence. Right and justice no longer existed. Money, force, pleasure, ruled supreme.

Still, the gold was melting as in a furnace at these fêtes; and, by Heaven's just punishment, Alexander and Cæsar were beginning to covet the fortunes of those very men who had risen through their simony to their present elevation. The first attempt at a new method of coining money was tried upon the Cardinal of Cosenza. The occasion was as follows. A certain dispensation had been granted some time before to a nun who had taken the vows: she was the only

surviving heir to the throne of Portugal, and by means of the dispensation she had been wedded to the natural son of the last king. This marriage was more prejudicial than can easily be imagined to the interests of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; so they sent ambassadors to Alexander to lodge a complaint against a proceeding of this nature, especially as it happened at the very moment when an alliance was to be formed between the house of Aragon and the Holy See. Alexander understood the complaint, and resolved that all should be set right. So he denied all knowledge of the papal brief—though he had as a fact received 60,000 ducats for signing it—and accused the Archbishop of Cosenza, secretary for apostolic briefs, of having granted a false dispensation. By reason of this accusation, the archbishop was taken to the castle of Sant' Angelo, and a suit was begun.

But as it was no easy task to prove an accusation of this nature, especially if the archbishop should persist in maintaining that the dispensation was really granted by the pope, it was resolved to employ a trick with him which could not fail to succeed. One evening the Archbishop of Cosenza saw Cardinal Valentino come into his prison; with that frank air of affability which he knew well how to assume when it could serve his purpose, he explained to the prisoner the embarrassing situation

in which the pope was placed, from which the archbishop alone, whom His Holiness looked upon as his best friend, could save him.

The archbishop replied that he was entirely at the service of His Holiness.

Cæsar, on his entrance, found the captive seated, leaning his elbows on a table, and he took a seat opposite him and explained the pope's position: it was an embarrassing one. At the very time of contracting so important an alliance with the house of Aragon as that of Lucrezia and Alfonso, His Holiness could not avow to Ferdinand and Isabella that, for the sake of a few miserable ducats, he had signed a dispensation which would unite in the husband and wife together all the legitimate claims to a throne to which Ferdinand and Isabella had no right at all but that of conquest. This avowal would necessarily put an end to all negotiations, and the pontifical house would fall by the overthrow of that very pedestal which was to have heightened its grandeur. Accordingly the archbishop would understand what the pope expected of his devotion and friendship: it was a simple and straight avowal that he had supposed he might take it upon himself to accord the dispensation. Then, as the sentence to be passed on such an error would be the business of Alexander, the accused could easily imagine beforehand how truly paternal such a sentence

would be. Besides, the reward was in the same hands, and if the sentence was that of a father, the recompense would be that of a king. In fact, this recompense would be no less than the honour of assisting as envoy, with the title of cardinal, at the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso—a favour which would be very appropriate, since it would be thanks to his devotion that the marriage could take place.

The Archbishop of Cosenza knew the men he was dealing with; he knew that to save their own ends they would hesitate at nothing; he knew they had a poison like sugar to the taste and to the smell, impossible to discover in food—a poison that would kill slowly or quickly as the poisoner willed and would leave no trace behind; he knew the secret of the poisoned key that lay always on the pope's mantelpiece, so that when His Holiness wished to destroy some one of his intimates, he bade him open a certain cupboard: on the handle of the key there was a little spike, and as the lock of the cupboard turned stiffly the hand would naturally press, the lock would yield, and nothing would have come of it but a trifling scratch: the scratch was mortal. He knew, too, that Cæsar wore a ring made like two lions' heads, and that he would turn the stone on the inside when he was shaking hands with a friend. Then the lions' teeth became the teeth of a viper, and the friend died cursing Borgia. So he

yielded, partly through fear, partly blinded by the thought of this reward; and Cæsar returned to the Vatican armed with a precious paper, in which the Archbishop of Cosenza admitted that he was the only person responsible for the dispensation granted to the royal nun. Two days later, by means of the proofs kindly furnished by the archbishop, the pope, in the presence of the governor of Rome, the auditor of the apostolic chamber, the advocate, and the fiscal attorney, pronounced sentence, condemning the archbishop to the loss of all his benefices and ecclesiastical offices, degradation from his orders, and confiscation of his goods; his person was to be handed over to the civil arm. Two days later the civil magistrate entered the prison to fulfil his office as received from the pope, and appeared before the archbishop, accompanied by a clerk, two servants, and four guards. The clerk unrolled the paper he carried and read out the sentence; the two servants untied a packet, and, stripping the prisoner of his ecclesiastical garments, they reclothed him in a dress of coarse white cloth which only reached down to his knees, breeches of the same, and a pair of clumsy shoes. Lastly, the guards took him, and led him into one of the deepest dungeons of the castle of Sant' Angelo, where for furniture he found nothing but a wooden crucifix, a table, a chair, and a bed; for occupation, a Bible and a breviary, with a

lamp to read by; for nourishment, two pounds of bread and a little cask of water, which were to be renewed every three days, together with a bottle of oil for burning in his lamp.

At the end of a year the poor archbishop died of despair, not before he had gnawed his own arms in his agony.

The very same day that he was taken into the dungeon, Cæsar Borgia, who had managed the affair so ably, was presented by the pope with all the belongings of the condemned prisoner.

But the hunting parties, balls, and masquerades were not the only pleasures enjoyed by the pope and his family: from time to time strange spectacles were exhibited. We will only describe two—one of them a case of punishment, the other no more nor less than a matter of the stud farm. But as both of these give details with which we would not have our readers credit our imagination, we will first say that they are literally translated from Burchard's Latin journal.

"About the same time—that is, about the beginning of 1499—a certain courtesan named La Corsetta was in prison, and had a lover who came to visit her in woman's clothes, a Spanish Moor, called from his disguise 'the Spanish lady from Barbary.' As a punishment, both of them were led through the town, the woman without petticoat or skirt, but

wearing only the Moor's dress unbuttoned in front; the man wore his woman's garb; his hands were tied behind his back, and the skirt fastened up to his middle, with a view to complete exposure before the eyes of all. When in this attire they had made the circuit of the town, the Corsetta was sent back to the prison with the Moor. But on the 7th of April following, the Moor was again taken out and escorted in the company of two thieves towards the Campo dei Fiori. The three condemned men were preceded by a constable, who rode backwards on an ass, and held in his hand a long pole, on the end of which were hung, still bleeding, the amputated limbs of a poor Jew who had suffered torture and death for some trifling crime. When the procession reached the place of execution, the thieves were hanged, and the unfortunate Moor was tied to a stake piled round with wood, where he was to have been burnt to death, had not rain fallen in such torrents that the fire would not burn, in spite of all the efforts of the executioner."

This unlooked-for accident, taken as a miracle by the people, robbed Lucrezia of the most exciting part of the execution; but her father was holding in reserve another kind of spectacle to console her with later. We inform the reader once more that a few lines we are about to set before him are a translation from the journal of the worthy German

Burchard, who saw nothing in the bloodiest or most wanton performances but facts for his journal, which he duly registered with the impassibility of a scribe, appending no remark or moral reflection.

"On the 11th of November a certain peasant was entering Rome with two stallions laden with wood, when the servants of His Holiness, just as he passed the Piazza of St. Peter's, cut their girths, so that their loads fell on the ground with the pack-saddles, and led off the horses to a court between the palace and the gate; then the stable doors were opened, and four stallions, quite free and unbridled, rushed out and in an instant all six animals began kicking, biting and fighting each other until several were killed. Roderigo and Madame Lucrezia, who sat at the window just over the palace gate, took the greatest delight in the struggle and called their courtiers to witness the gallant battle that was being fought below them.

Now Cæsar's trick in the matter of the Archbishop of Cosenza had had the desired result, and Isabella and Ferdinand could no longer impute to Alexander the signature of the brief they had complained of: so nothing was now in the way of the marriage of Lucrezia and Alfonso; this certainty gave the pope great joy, for he attached all the more importance to this marriage because he was already

cogitating a second, between Cæsar and Doña Carlota, Frederic's daughter.

Cæsar had shown in all his actions since his brother's death his want of vocation for the ecclesiastical life; so no one was astonished when, a consistory having been summoned one morning by Alexander, Cæsar entered, and addressing the pope, began by saying that from his earliest years he had been drawn towards secular pursuits both by natural inclination and ability, and it had only been in obedience to the absolute commands of His Holiness that he entered the Church, accepted the cardinal's scarlet, other dignities, and finally the sacred order of the diaconate; but feeling that in his situation it was improper to follow his passions, and at his age impossible to resist them, he humbly entreated His Holiness graciously to yield to the desire he had failed to overcome, and to permit him to lay aside the dress and dignities of the Church, and enter once more into the world, there to contract a lawful marriage; also he entreated the lord cardinals to intercede for him with His Holiness, to whom he would freely resign all his churches, abbeys, and benefices, as well as every other ecclesiastical dignity and preferment that had been accorded him. The cardinals, deferring to Cæsar's wishes, gave a unanimous vote, and the pope, as we may suppose, like a good father, not wishing to force his son's

inclinations, accepted his resignation, and yielded to the petition; thus Cæsar put off the scarlet robe, which was suited to him, says his historian, Tommaso Tommasi, in one particular only—that it was the colour of blood.

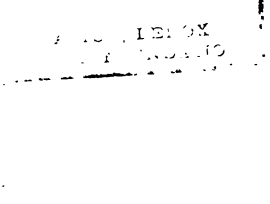
In truth, the resignation was a pressing necessity, and there was no time to lose. Charles VIII one day after he had come home late and tired from the hunting-field, had bathed his head in cold water, and going straight to table, had been struck down by an apoplectic seizure directly after his supper, and was dead, leaving the throne to the good Louis XII, a man of two conspicuous weaknesses, one as deplorable as the other: the first was the wish to make conquests; the second was the desire to have children. Alexander, who was on the watch for all political changes, had seen in a moment what he could get from Louis XII's accession to the throne, and was prepared to profit by the fact that the new king of France needed his help for the accomplishment of his twofold desire. Louis needed, first, his temporal aid in an expedition against the duchy of Milan, on which, as we explained before, he had inherited claims from Valentina Visconti, his grandmother; and, secondly, his spiritual aid to dissolve his marriage with Jeanne, the daughter of Louis XI, a childless and hideously deformed woman, whom he had only married by reason of the great fear he

entertained for her father. Now Alexander was willing to do all this for Louis XII and to give in addition a cardinal's hat to his friend George d'Amboise, provided only that the King of France would use his influence in persuading the young Doña Carlota, who was at his court, to marry his son Cæsar.

So, as this business was already far advanced on the day when Cæsar doffed his scarlet and donned a secular garb, thus fulfilling the ambition so long cherished, when the lord of Villeneuve, sent by Louis and commissioned to bring Cæsar to France, presented himself before the ex-cardinal on his arrival at Rome, the latter, with his usual extravagance of luxury and the kindness he knew well how to bestow on those he needed, entertained his guest for a month, and did all the honours of Rome. After that, they departed, preceded by one of the pope's couriers, who gave orders that every town they passed through was to receive them with marks of honour and respect. The same order had been sent throughout the whole of France, where the illustrious visitors received so numerous a guard, and were welcomed by a populace so eager to behold them, that after they passed through Paris, Cæsar's gentlemen-in-waiting wrote to Rome that they had not seen any trees in France, or houses, or walls, but only men, women, and sunshine.

Cesare Borgia.

From the original in the Correr Museum, Venice



The king, on the pretext of going out hunting, went to meet his guest two leagues outside the town. As he knew Cæsar was very fond of the name of Valentino, which he had used as cardinal, and still continued to employ with the title of Count, although he had resigned the archbishopric which gave him the name, he there and then bestowed on him the investiture of Valence, in Dauphiné, with the title of Duke and a pension of 20,000 francs; then, when he had made this magnificent gift and talked with him for nearly a couple of hours, he took his leave, to enable him to prepare the splendid entry he was proposing to make.

It was Wednesday, the 18th of December 1498, when Cæsar Borgia entered the town of Chinon, with pomp worthy of the son of a pope who is about to marry the daughter of a king. The procession began with four-and-twenty mules, caparisoned in red, adorned with escutcheons bearing the duke's arms, laden with carved trunks and chests inlaid with ivory and silver; after them came four-and-twenty more, also caparisoned, this time in the livery of the King of France, yellow and red; next after these came ten other mules, covered in yellow satin with red cross-bars; and lastly another ten, covered with striped cloth of gold, the stripes alternately raised and flat gold.

Behind the seventy mules which led the procession

there pranced sixteen handsome battle-horses, led by equerries who marched alongside; these were followed by eighteen hunters ridden by eighteen pages, who were about fourteen or fifteen years of age; sixteen of them were dressed in crimson velvet, and two in raised gold cloth; so elegantly dressed were these two children, who were also the best looking of the little band, that the sight of them gave rise to strange suspicions as to the reason for this preference, if one may believe what Brantôme says. Finally, behind these eighteen horses came six beautiful mules, all harnessed with red velvet, and led by six valets, also in velvet to match.

The third group consisted of, first, two mules quite covered with cloth of gold, each carrying two chests in which it was said that the duke's treasure was stored, the precious stones he was bringing to his *fiancée,* and the relics and papal bulls that his father had charged him to convey for him to Louis XII. These were followed by twenty gentlemen dressed in cloth of gold and silver, among whom rode Paul Giordano Orsino and several barons and knights among the chiefs of the state ecclesiastic.

Next came two drums, one rebeck, and four soldiers blowing trumpets and silver clarions; then, in the midst of a party of four-and-twenty lacqueys, dressed half in crimson velvet and half in yellow silk, rode Messire George d'Amboise and Monseigneur

the Duke of Valentinois. Cæsar was mounted on a handsome tall courser, very richly harnessed, in a robe half red satin and half cloth of gold, embroidered all over with pearls and precious stones; in his cap were two rows of rubies, the size of beans, which reflected so brilliant a light that one might have fancied they were the famous carbuncles of the *Arabian Nights;* he also wore on his neck a collar worth at least 200,000 livres; indeed, there was no part of him, even down to his boots, that was not laced with gold and edged with pearls. His horse was covered with a cuirass in a pattern of golden foliage of wonderful workmanship, among which there appeared to grow, like flowers, nosegays of pearls and clusters of rubies.

Lastly, bringing up the rear of the magnificent cortège, behind the duke came twenty-four mules with red caparisons bearing his arms, carrying his silver plate, tents, and baggage.

What gave to all the cavalcade an air of most wonderful luxury and extravagance was that the horses and mules were shod with golden shoes, and these were so badly nailed on that more than three-quarters of their number were lost on the road. For this extravagance Cæsar was greatly blamed, for it was thought an audacious thing to put on his horses' feet a metal of which king's crowns are made.

But all this pomp had no effect on the lady for whose sake it had been displayed; for when Doña Carlota was told that Cæsar Borgia had come to France in the hope of becoming her husband, she replied simply that she would never take a priest for her husband, and, moreover, the son of a priest; a man who was not only an assassin, but a fratricide; not only a man of infamous birth, but still more infamous in his morals and his actions.

But, in default of the haughty lady of Aragon, Cæsar soon found another princess of noble blood who consented to be his wife: this was Mademoiselle d'Albret, daughter of the King of Navarre. The marriage, arranged on condition that the pope should pay 200,000 ducats as dowry to the bride, and should make her brother cardinal, was celebrated on the 10th of May; and on the Whitsunday following the Duke of Valentinois received the order of St. Michael, an order founded by Louis XI, and esteemed at this period as the highest in the gift of the kings of France. The news of this marriage, which made an alliance with Louis XII certain, was received with great joy by the pope, who at once gave orders for bonfires and illuminations all over the town.

Louis XII was not only grateful to the pope for dissolving his marriage with Jeanne of France and authorizing his union with Anne of Brittany, but he considered it indispensable to his designs in Italy to

have the pope as his ally. So he promised the Duke of Valentinois to put three hundred lances at his disposal, as soon as he had made an entry into Milan, to be used to further his own private interests, and against whomsoever he pleased except only the allies of France. The conquest of Milan should be undertaken so soon as Louis felt assured of the support of the Venetians, or at least of their neutrality, and he had sent them ambassadors authorised to promise in his name the restoration of Cremona and Ghiera d'Adda when he had completed the conquest of Lombardy.

CHAPTER IX

EVERYTHING from without was favouring Alexander's encroaching policy, when he was compelled to turn his eyes from France towards the centre of Italy: in Florence dwelt a man, neither duke, nor king, nor soldier, a man whose power was in his genius, whose armour was his purity, who owned no offensive weapon but his tongue, and who yet began to grow more dangerous for him than all the kings, dukes, princes, in the whole world could ever be; this man was the poor Dominican monk Girolamo Savonarola, the same who had refused absolution to Lorenzo dei Medici because he would not restore the liberty of Florence.

Girolamo Savonarola had prophesied the invasion of a force from beyond the Alps, and Charles VIII had conquered Naples; Girolamo Savonarola had prophesied to Charles VIII that because he had failed to fulfil the mission of liberator entrusted to him by God, he was threatened with a great misfortune as a punishment, and Charles was dead; lastly, Savonarola had prophesied his own fall like the man who paced around the holy city for eight days, crying, "Woe to Jerusalem!" and on the ninth day, "Woe

be on my own head!" None the less, the Florentine reformer, who could not recoil from any danger, was determined to attack the colossal abomination that was seated on St. Peter's holy throne; each debauch, each fresh crime that lifted up its brazen face to the light of day or tried to hide its shameful head beneath the veil of night, he had never failed to point out to the people, denouncing it as the offspring of the pope's luxurious living and lust of power. Thus had he stigmatised Alexander's new amour with the beautiful Giulia Farnese, who in the preceding April had added another son to the pope's family; thus had he cursed the Duke of Gandia's murderer, the lustful, jealous fratricide; lastly, he had pointed out to the Florentines, who were excluded from the league then forming, what sort of future was in store for them when the Borgias should have made themselves masters of the small principalities and should come to attack the duchies and republics. It was clear that in Savonarola, the pope had an enemy at once temporal and spiritual, whose importunate and threatening voice must be silenced at any cost.

But mighty as the pope's power was, to accomplish a design like this was no easy matter. Savonarola, preaching the stern principles of liberty, had united to his cause, even in the midst of rich, pleasure-loving Florence, a party of some size,

known as the *Piagnoni,* or the Penitents: this band was composed of citizens who were anxious for reform in Church and State, who accused the Medici of enslaving the fatherland and the Borgias of upsetting the faith, who demanded two things, that the republic should return to her democratic principles, and religion to a primitive simplicity. Towards the first of these projects considerable progress had been made, since they had successively obtained, first, an amnesty for all crimes and delinquencies committed under other governments; secondly, the abolition of the *balia,* which was an aristocratic magistracy; thirdly, the establishment of a sovereign council, composed of 1,800 citizens; and lastly, the substitution of popular elections for drawing by lot and for oligarchical nominations: these changes had been effected in spite of two other factions, the *Arrabiati,* or Madmen, who, consisting of the richest and noblest youths of the Florentine patrician families, desired to have an oligarchical government; and the *Bigi,* or Greys, so called because they always held their meetings in the shade, who desired the return of the Medici.

The first measure Alexander used against the growing power of Savonarola was to declare him heretic, and as such banished from the pulpit; but Savonarola had eluded this prohibition by making his pupil and friend, Domenico Bonvicini di Pescia,

preach in his stead. The result was that the master's teachings were issued from other lips, and that was all; the seed, though scattered by another hand, fell none the less on fertile soil, where it would soon burst into flower. Moreover, Savonarola now set an example that was followed to good purpose by Luther, when, twenty-two years later, he burned Leo x's bull of excommunication at Wittenberg; he was weary of silence, so he declared, on the authority of Pope Pelagius, that an unjust excommunication had no efficacy, and that the person excommunicated unjustly did not even need to get absolution. So on Christmas Day, 1497, he declared that by the inspiration of God he renounced his obedience to a corrupt master; and he began to preach once more in the cathedral, with a success that was all the greater for the interruption, and an influence far more formidable than before, because it was strengthened by that sympathy of the masses which an unjust persecution always inspires.

Then Alexander made overtures to Leonardo dei Medici, vicar of the archbishopric of Florence, to obtain the punishment of the rebel: Leonardo, in obedience to the orders he received from Rome, issued a mandate forbidding the faithful to attend at Savonarola's sermons. After this mandate, any who should hear the discourses of the excommunicated monk would be refused communion and con-

fession; and as when they died they would be contaminated with heresy, in consequence of their spiritual intercourse with a heretic, their dead bodies would be dragged on a hurdle and deprived of the rights of sepulture. Savonarola appealed from the mandate of his superior both to the people and to the Signoria, and the two together gave orders to the episcopal vicar to leave Florence within two hours: this happened at the beginning of the year 1498.

The expulsion of Leonardo dei Medici was a new triumph for Savonarola, so, wishing to turn to good moral account his growing influence, he resolved to convert the last day of the carnival, hitherto given up to worldly pleasures, into a day of religious sacrifice. So actually on Shrove Tuesday a considerable number of boys were collected in front of the cathedral, and there divided into bands, which traversed the whole town, making a house-to-house visitation, claiming all profane books, licentious paintings, lutes, harps, cards and dice, cosmetics and perfumes —in a word, all the hundreds of products of a corrupt society and civilisation, by the aid of which Satan at times makes victorious war on God. The inhabitants of Florence obeyed, and came forth to the Piazza of the Duomo, bringing these works of perdition, which were soon piled up in a huge stack, which the youthful reformers set on fire, singing

religious psalms and hymns the while. On this pile were burned many copies of Boccaccio and of Morgante Maggiore, and pictures by Fra Bartolommeo, who from that day forward renounced the art of this world to consecrate his brush utterly and entirely to the reproduction of religious scenes.

A reform such as this was terrifying to Alexander; so he resolved on fighting Savonarola with his own weapons—that is, by the force of eloquence. He chose as the Dominican's opponent a preacher of recognised talent, called Fra Francesco di Paglia; and he sent him to Florence, where he began to preach in Santa Croce, accusing Savonarola of heresy and impiety. At the same time the pope, in a new brief, announced to the Signoria that unless they forbade the arch-heretic to preach, all the goods of Florentine merchants who lived on the papal territory would be confiscated, and the republic laid under an interdict and declared the spiritual and temporal enemy of the Church. The Signoria, abandoned by France, and aware that the material power of Rome was increasing in a frightful manner, was forced this time to yield, and to issue to Savonarola an order to leave off preaching. He obeyed, and bade farewell to his congregation in a sermon full of strength and eloquence.

But the withdrawal of Savonarola, so far from calming the ferment, had increased it: there was

talk about his prophecies being fulfilled; and some zealots, more ardent than their master, added miracle to inspiration, and loudly proclaimed that Savonarola had offered to go down into the vaults of the cathedral with his antagonist, and there bring a dead man to life again, to prove that his doctrine was true, promising to declare himself vanquished if the miracle were performed by his adversary. These rumours reached the ears of Fra Francesco, and as he was a man of warm blood, who counted his own life as nothing if it might be spent to help his cause, he declared in all humility that he felt he was too great a sinner for God to work a miracle in his behalf; but he proposed another challenge: he would try with Savonarola the ordeal of fire. He knew, he said, that he must perish, but at least he should perish avenging the cause of religion, since he was certain to involve in his destruction the tempter who plunged so many souls beside his own into eternal damnation.

The proposition made by Fra Francesco was taken to Savonarola; but as he had never proposed the earlier challenge, he hesitated to accept the second; hereupon his disciple, Fra Domenico Bonvicini, more confident than his master in his own power, declared himself ready to accept the trial by fire in his stead, so certain was he that God would perform a miracle by the intercession of Savonarola, His

prophet. Instantly the report spread through Florence that the mortal challenge was accepted; Savonarola's partisans, all men of the strongest convictions, felt no doubt as to the success of their cause. His enemies were enchanted at the thought of the heretic giving himself to the flames; and the indifferent saw in the ordeal a spectacle of real and terrible interest.

But the devotion of Fra Bonvicini of Pescia was not what Fra Francesco was reckoning with. He was willing, no doubt, to die a terrible death, but on condition that Savonarola died with him. What mattered to him the death of an obscure disciple like Fra Bonvicini? It was the master he would strike, the great teacher who must be involved in his own ruin. So he refused to enter the fire except with Savonarola himself, and, playing this terrible game in his own person, would not allow his adversary to play it by proxy.

Then a thing happened which certainly no one could have anticipated. In the place of Fra Francesco, who would not tilt with any but the master, two Franciscan monks appeared to tilt with the disciple. These were Fra Nicholas de Pilly and Fra Andrea Rondinelli. Immediately the partisans of Savonarola, seeing this arrival of reinforcements for their antagonist, came forward in a crowd to try the ordeal. The Franciscans were unwilling to be

behindhand, and everybody took sides with equal ardour for one or other party. All Florence was like a den of madmen; everyone wanted the ordeal, everyone wanted to go into the fire; not only did men challenge one another, but women and even children were clamouring to be allowed to try. At last the Signoria, reserving this privilege for the first applicants, ordered that the strange duel should take place only between Fra Domenico Bonvicini and Fra Andrea Rondinelli; ten of the citizens were to arrange all details; the day was fixed for the 7th of April, 1498, and the place the Piazza del Palazzo.

The judges of the field made their arrangements conscientiously. By their orders scaffolding was erected at the appointed place, five feet in height, ten in width, and eighty feet long. This scaffolding was covered with faggots and heath, supported by cross-bars of the very driest wood that could be found. Two narrow paths were made, two feet wide at most, their entrance giving on the Loggia dei Lanzi, their exit exactly opposite. The loggia was itself divided into two by a partition, so that each champion had a kind of room to make his preparations in, just as in the theatre every actor has his dressing-room; but in this instance the tragedy that was about to be played was not a fictitious one.

The Franciscans arrived on the piazza and entered the compartment reserved for them without making

any religious demonstration; while Savonarola, on the contrary, advanced to his own place in the procession, wearing the sacerdotal robes in which he had just celebrated the Holy Eucharist, and holding in his hand the sacred host for all the world to see, as it was enclosed in a crystal tabernacle. Fra Domenico di Pescia, the hero of the occasion, followed, bearing a crucifix, and all the Dominican monks, their red crosses in their hands, marched behind singing a psalm; while behind them again followed the most considerable of the citizens of their party, bearing torches, for, sure as they were of the triumph of their cause, they wished to fire the faggots themselves. The piazza was so crowded that the people overflowed into all the streets around. In every door and window there was nothing to be seen but heads ranged one above the other; the terraces were covered with people, and curious spectators were observed on the roof of the Duomo and on the top of the Campanile.

But, brought face to face with the ordeal, the Franciscans raised such difficulties that it was very plain the heart of their champion was failing him. The first fear they expressed was that Fra Bonvicini was an enchanter, and so carried about him some talisman or charm which would save him from the fire. So they insisted that he should be stripped of all his clothes and put on others to be inspected by

witnesses. Fra Bonvicini made no objection, though the suspicion was humiliating; he changed shirt, dress, and cowl. Then, when the Franciscans observed that Savonarola was placing the tabernacle in his hands, they protested that it was profanation to expose the sacred host to the risk of burning, that this was not in the bond, and if Bonvicini would not give up this supernatural aid, they for their part would give up the trial altogether. Savonarola replied that it was not astonishing that the champion of religion who put his faith in God should bear in his hands that very God to whom he entrusted his salvation. But this reply did not satisfy the Franciscans, who were unwilling to let go their contention. Savonarola remained inflexible, supporting his own right, and thus nearly four hours passed in the discussion of points which neither party would give up, and affairs remained *in statu quo*. Meanwhile the people, jammed together in the streets, on the terraces, on the roofs, since break of day, were suffering from hunger and thirst and beginning to get impatient: their impatience soon developed into loud murmurs, which reached even the champions' ears, so that the partisans of Savonarola, who felt such faith in him that they were confident of a miracle, entreated him to yield to all the conditions suggested. To this Savonarola replied that if it were himself making the trial he would be less

inexorable; but since another man was incurring the danger, he could not take too many precautions. Two more hours passed, while his partisans tried in vain to combat his refusals. At last, as night was coming on and the people grew ever more and more impatient and their murmurs began to assume a threatening tone, Bonvicini declared that he was ready to walk through the fire, holding nothing in his hand but a crucifix. No one could refuse him this; so Fra Rondinelli was compelled to accept his proposition. The announcement was made to the populace that the champions had come to terms and the trial was about to take place. At this news the people calmed down, in the hope of being compensated at last for their long wait; but at that very moment a storm which had long been threatening broke over Florence with such fury that the faggots which had just been lighted were extinguished by the rain, leaving no possibility of their rekindling. From the moment when the people suspected that they had been fooled, their enthusiasm was changed into derision. They were ignorant from which side the difficulties had arisen that had hindered the trial, so they laid the responsibility on both champions without distinction. The Signoria, foreseeing the disorder that was now imminent, ordered the assembly to retire; but the assembly thought otherwise, and stayed on the piazza, waiting for the departure of

the two champions, in spite of the fearful rain that still fell in torrents. Rondinelli was taken back amid shouts and hootings, and pursued with showers of stones. Savonarola, thanks to his sacred garments and the host which he still carried, passed calmly enough through the midst of the mob—a miracle quite as remarkable as if he had passed through the fire unscathed.

But it was only the sacred majesty of the host that had protected this man, who was indeed from this moment regarded as a false prophet: the crowd allowed Savonarola to return to his convent, but they regretted the necessity, so excited were they by the *Arrabbiati* party, who had always denounced him as a liar and a hypocrite. So when the next morning, Palm Sunday, he stood up in the pulpit to explain his conduct, he could not obtain a moment's silence for insults, hooting, and loud laughter. Then the outcry, at first derisive, became menacing: Savonarola, whose voice was too weak to subdue the tumult, descended from his pulpit, retired into the sacristy, and thence to his convent, where he shut himself up in his cell. At that moment a cry was heard, and was repeated by everybody present: "To San Marco, to San Marco!" The rioters, few at first, were recruited by all the populace as they swept along the streets, and at last reached the convent, dashing like an angry sea against the wall.

The doors, closed on Savonarola's entrance, soon crashed before the vehement onset of the powerful multitude, which struck down on the instant every obstacle it met: the whole convent was quickly flooded with people, and Savonarola, with his two confederates, Domenico Bonvicini and Silvestro Maruffi, was arrested in his cell, and conducted to prison amid the insults of the crowd, who, always in extremes, whether of enthusiasm or hatred, would have liked to tear them to pieces, and would not be quieted till they had exacted a promise that the prisoners should be forcibly compelled to make the trial of fire which they had refused to make of their own free will.

Alexander VI, as we may suppose, had not been without influence in bringing about this sudden and astonishing reaction, although he was not present in person; and had scarcely learned the news of Savonarola's fall and arrest when he claimed him as subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But in spite of the grant of indulgences wherewith this demand was accompanied, the Signoria insisted that Savonarola's trial should take place at Florence, adding a request —so as not to appear to withdraw the accused completely from the pontifical authority—that the pope would send two ecclesiastical judges to sit in the Florentine tribunal. Alexander, seeing that he would get nothing better from the magnificent

republic, sent as deputies Gioacchino Turriano of Venice, General of the Dominicans, and Francesco Ramolini, doctor in law: they practically brought the sentence with them, declaring Savonarola and his accomplices heretics, schismatics, persecutors of the Church and seducers of the people.

The firmness shown by the Florentines in claiming their rights of jurisdiction were nothing but an empty show to save appearances; the tribunal, as a fact, was composed of eight members, all known to be fervent haters of Savonarola, whose trial began with the torture. The result was that, feeble in body and constitutionally nervous and irritable, he had not been able to endure the rack, and, overcome by agony just at the moment when the executioner had lifted him up by the wrists and then dropped him a distance of two feet to the ground, he had confessed, in order to get some respite, that his prophecies were nothing more than conjectures. It is true that, so soon as he went back to prison, he protested against the confession, saying that it was the weakness of his bodily organs and his want of firmness that had wrested the lie from him, but that the truth really was that the Lord had several times appeared to him in his ecstasies and revealed the things that he had spoken. This protestation led to a new application of the torture, during which Savonarola succumbed once more to the dreadful

pain, and once more retracted. But scarcely was he unbound, and was still lying on the bed of torture, when he declared that his confessions were the fault of his torturers, and the vengeance would recoil upon their heads; and he protested yet once more against all he had confessed and might confess again. A third time the torture produced the same avowals, and the relief that followed it the same retractions. The judges therefore, when they condemned him and his two disciples to the flames, decided that his confession should not be read aloud at the stake, according to custom, feeling certain that on this occasion also he would give it the lie, and that publicly, which, as anyone must see who knew the versatile spirit of the public, would be a most dangerous proceeding.

On the 23rd of May, the fire which had been promised to the people before was a second time prepared on the Piazza del Palazzo, and this time the crowd assembled quite certain that they would not be disappointed of a spectacle so long anticipated. And towards eleven o'clock in the morning, Girolamo Savonarola, Domenico Bonvicini, and Silvestro Maruffi were led to the place of execution, degraded of their orders by the ecclesiastical judges, and bound all three to the same stake in the centre of an immense pile of wood. Then the bishop Pagnanoli told the condemned men that he cut them off

from the Church. "Ay, from the Church militant," said Savonarola, who from that very hour, thanks to his martyrdom, was entering into the Church triumphant. No other words were spoken by the condemned men, for at this moment one of the *Arrabbiati*, a personal enemy of Savonarola, breaking through the hedge of guards around the scaffold, snatched the torch from the executioner's hand and himself set fire to the four corners of the pile. Savonarola and his disciples, from the moment when they saw the smoke arise, began to sing a psalm, and the flames enwrapped them on all sides with a glowing veil, while their religious song was yet heard mounting upward to the gates of heaven.

Pope Alexander VI was thus set free from perhaps the most formidable enemy who had ever risen against him, and the pontifical vengeance pursued the victims even after their death: the Signoria, yielding to his wishes, gave orders that the ashes of the prophet and his disciples should be thrown into the Arno. But certain half-burned fragments were picked up by the very soldiers whose business it was to keep the people back from approaching the fire, and the holy relics are even now shown, blackened by the flames, to the faithful, who if they no longer regard Savonarola as a prophet, revere him none the less as a martyr.

CHAPTER X

THE French army was now preparing to cross the Alps a second time, under the command of Trivulce. Louis XII had come as far as Lyons in the company of Cæsar Borgia and Giuliano della Rovere, on whom he had forced a reconciliation, and towards the beginning of the month of May had sent his vanguard before him, soon to be followed by the main body of the army. The forces he was employing in this second campaign of conquest were 1600 lances, 5000 Swiss, 4000 Gascons, and 3500 infantry, raised from all parts of France. On the 13th of August this whole body, amounting to nearly 15,000 men, who were to combine their forces with the Venetians, arrived beneath the walls of Arezzo, and immediately laid siege to the town.

Ludovico Sforza's position was a terrible one: he was now suffering from his imprudence in calling the French into Italy; all the allies he had thought he might count upon were abandoning him at the same moment, either because they were busy about their own affairs, or because they were afraid of the powerful enemy that the Duke of Milan had

made for himself. Maximilian, who had promised him a contribution of 400 lances, to make up for not renewing the hostilities with Louis XII that had been interrupted, had just made a league with the circle of Swabia to war against the Swiss, whom he had declared rebels against the Empire. The Florentines, who had engaged to furnish him with 300 men-at-arms and 2000 infantry, if he would help them to retake Pisa, had just retracted their promise because of Louis XII's threats, and had undertaken to remain neutral. Frederic, who was holding back his troops for the defence of his own States, because he supposed, not without reason, that, Milan once conquered, he would again have to defend Naples, sent him no help, no men, no money, in spite of his promises. Ludovico Sforza was therefore reduced to his own proper forces.

But as he was a man powerful in arms and clever in artifice, he did not allow himself to succumb at the first blow, and in all haste fortified Annona, Novarro, and Alessandria, sent off Cajazzo with troops to that part of the Milanese territory which borders on the states of Venice, and collected on the Po as many troops as he could. But these precautions availed him nothing against the impetuous onslaught of the French, who in a few days had taken Annona, Arezzo, Novarro, Voghiera, Castel-

nuovo, Ponte Corona, Tortone, and Alessandria, while Trivulce was on the march to Milan.

Seeing the rapidity of this conquest and their numerous victories, Ludovico Sforza, despairing of holding out in his capital, resolved to retire to Germany, with his children, his brother, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, and his treasure, which had been reduced in the course of eight years from 1,500,000 to 200,000 ducats. But before he went he left Bernardino da Corte in charge of the castle of Milan. In vain did his friends warn him to distrust this man, in vain did his brother Ascanio offer to hold the fortress himself, and offer to hold it to the very last; Ludovico refused to make any change in his arrangements, and started on the 2nd of September, leaving in the citadel three thousand foot and enough provisions, ammunition, and money to sustain a siege of several months.

Two days after Ludovico's departure, the French entered Milan. Ten days later Bernardino da Corte gave up the castle before a single gun had been fired. Twenty-one days had sufficed for the French to get possession of the various towns, the capital, and all the territories of their enemy.

Louis XII received the news of this success while he was at Lyons, and he at once started for Milan, where he was received with demonstrations of joy that were really sincere. Citizens of every rank had

come out three miles' distance from the gates to receive him, and forty boys, dressed in cloth of gold and silk, marched before him singing hymns of victory composed by poets of the period, in which the king was styled their liberator and the envoy of freedom. The great joy of the Milanese people was due to the fact that friends of Louis had been spreading reports beforehand that the King of France was rich enough to abolish all taxes. And so soon as the second day from his arrival at Milan the conqueror made some slight reduction, granted important favours to certain Milanese gentlemen, and bestowed the town of Vigavano on Trivulce as a reward for his swift and glorious campaign. But Cæsar Borgia, who had followed Louis XII with a view to playing his part in the great hunting-ground of Italy, scarcely waited for him to attain his end when he claimed the fulfilment of his promise, which the king with his accustomed loyalty hastened to perform. He instantly put at the disposal of Cæsar three hundred lances under the command of Yves d'Alègre, and four thousand Swiss under the command of the bailiff of Dijon, as a help in his work of reducing the *Vicars of the Church.*

We must now explain to our readers who these new personages were whom we introduce upon the scene by the above name.

During the eternal wars of Guelphs and Ghibel-

lines and the long exile of the popes at Avignon, most of the towns and fortresses of the Romagna had been usurped by petty tyrants, who for the most part had received from the Empire the investiture of their new possessions; but ever since German influence had retired beyond the Alps, and the popes had again made Rome the centre of the Christian world, all the small princes, robbed of their original protector, had rallied round the papal see, and received at the hands of the pope a new investiture, and now they paid annual dues, for which they received the particular title of duke, count, or lord, and the general name of *Vicar of the Church*.

It had been no difficult matter for Alexander, scrupulously examining the actions and behaviour of these gentlemen during the seven years that had elapsed since he was exalted to St. Peter's throne, to find in the conduct of each one of them something that could be called an infraction of the treaty made between vassals and suzerain; accordingly he brought forward his complaints at a tribunal established for the purpose, and obtained sentence from the judges to the effect that the vicars of the Church, having failed to fulfil the conditions of their investiture, were despoiled of their domains, which would again become the property of the Holy See. As the pope was now dealing with men against whom it was easier to pass a sentence than to get it carried

out, he had nominated as captain-general the new Duke of Valentinois, who was commissioned to recover the territories for his own benefit. The lords in question were the Malatesti of Rimini, the Sforza of Pesaro, the Manfredi of Faenza, the Riarii of Imola and Forli, the Variani of Camerino, the Montefeltri of Urbino, and the Caetani of Sermoneta.

But the Duke of Valentinois, eager to keep as warm as possible his great friendship with his ally and relative Louis XII, was, as we know, staying with him at Milan so long as he remained there, where, after a month's occupation, the king retraced his steps to his own capital, the Duke of Valentinois ordered his men-at-arms and his Swiss to await him between Parma and Modena, and departed post-haste for Rome, to explain his plans to his father *vivâ voce* and to receive his final instructions. When he arrived, he found that the fortune of his sister Lucrezia had been greatly augmented in his absence, not from the side of her husband Alfonso, whose future was very uncertain now in consequence of Louis's successes, which had caused some coolness between Alfonso and the pope, but from her father's side, upon whom at this time she exercised an influence more astonishing than ever. The pope had declared Lucrezia Borgia of Aragon life-governor of Spoleto and its duchy, with all emoluments, rights,

and revenues accruing thereunto. This had so greatly increased her power and improved her position, that in these days she never showed herself in public without a company of two hundred horses ridden by the most illustrious ladies and noblest knights of Rome. Moreover, as the twofold affection of her father was a secret to nobody, the first prelates in the Church, the frequenters of the Vatican, the friends of His Holiness, were all her most humble servants; cardinals gave her their hands when she stepped from her litter or her horse, archbishops disputed the honour of celebrating mass in her private apartments.

But Lucrezia had been obliged to quit Rome in order to take possession of her new estates; and as her father could not spend much time away from his beloved daughter, he resolved to take into his hands the town of Nepi, which on a former occasion, as the reader will doubtless remember, he had bestowed on Ascanio Sforza in exchange for his suffrage. Ascanio had naturally lost this town when he attached himself to the fortunes of the Duke of Milan, his brother; and when the pope was about to take it again, he invited his daughter Lucrezia to join him there and be present at the rejoicings held in honour of his resuming its possession.

Lucrezia's readiness in giving way to her father's wishes brought her a new gift from him: this was

the town and territory of Sermoneta, which belonged to the Caetani. Of course the gift was as yet a secret, because the two owners of the seigneury had first to be disposed of, one being Monsignore Giacomo Caetano, apostolic protonotary, the other Prospero Caetano, a young cavalier of great promise; but as both lived at Rome, and entertained no suspicion, but indeed supposed themselves to be in high favour with His Holiness, the one by virtue of his position, the other of his courage, the matter seemed to present no great difficulty. So directly after the return of Alexander to Rome, Giacomo Caetano was arrested, on what pretext we know not, was taken to the castle of Sant' Angelo, and there died shortly after, of poison: Prospero Caetano was strangled in his own house. After these two deaths, which both occurred so suddenly as to give no time for either to make a will, the pope declared that Sermoneta and all other property appertaining to the Caetani devolved upon the apostolic chamber; and they were sold to Lucrezia for the sum of 80,000 crowns, which her father refunded to her the day after. Though Cæsar hurried to Rome, he found when he arrived that his father had been beforehand with him, and had made a beginning of his conquests.

Another fortune also had been making prodigious strides during Cæsar's stay in France, viz. the for-

tune of Gian Borgia, the pope's nephew, who had been one of the most devoted friends of the Duke of Gandia up to the time of his death. It was said in Rome, and not in a whisper, that the young cardinal owed the favours heaped upon him by His Holiness less to the memory of the brother than to the protection of the sister. Both these reasons made Gian Borgia a special object of suspicion to Cæsar, and it was with an inward vow that he should not enjoy his new dignities very long that the Duke of Valentinois heard that his cousin Gian had just been nominated cardinal *a latere* of all the Christian world, and had quitted Rome to make a circuit through all the pontifical states with a suite of archbishops, bishops, prelates, and gentlemen, such as would have done honour to the pope himself.

Cæsar had only come to Rome to get news; so he only stayed three days, and then, with all the troops His Holiness could supply, rejoined his forces on the borders of the Euza, and marched at once to Imola. This town, abandoned by its chiefs, who had retired to Forli, was forced to capitulate. Imola taken, Cæsar marched straight upon Forli. There he met with a serious check; a check, moreover, which came from a woman. Caterina Sforza, widow of Girolamo and mother of Ottaviano Riario, had retired to this town, and stirred up the courage of the garrison by putting herself, her goods and her

person, under their protection. Cæsar saw that it was no longer a question of a sudden capture, but of a regular siege; so he began to make all his arrangements with a view to it, and placing a battery of cannon in front of the place where the walls seemed to him weakest, he ordered an uninterrupted fire, to be continued until the breach was practicable.

When he returned to the camp after giving this order, he found there Gian Borgia, who had gone to Rome from Ferrara and was unwilling to be so near Cæsar without paying him a visit: he was received with effusion and apparently the greatest joy, and stayed three days; on the fourth day all the officers and members of the court were invited to a grand farewell supper, and Cæsar bade farewell to his cousin, charging him with despatches for the pope, and lavishing upon him all the tokens of affection he had shown on his arrival.

Cardinal Gian Borgia posted off as soon as he left the supper-table, but on arriving at Urbino he was seized with such a sudden and strange indisposition that he was forced to stop; but after a few minutes, feeling rather better, he went on; scarcely, however, had he entered Rocca Contrada when he again felt so extremely ill that he resolved to go no farther, and stayed a couple of days in the town. Then, as he thought he was a little better again, and as he had heard the news of the taking of Forli and

also that Caterina Sforza had been taken prisoner while she was making an attempt to retire into the castle, he resolved to go back to Cæsar and congratulate him on his victory; but at Fossombrone he was forced to stop a third time, although he had given up his carriage for a litter. This was his last halt: the same day he sought his bed, never to rise from it again; three days later he was dead.

His body was taken to Rome and buried without any ceremony in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, where lay awaiting him the corpse of his friend the Duke of Gandia; and there was now no more talk of the young cardinal, high as his rank had been, than if he had never existed. Thus in gloom and silence passed away all those who were swept to destruction by the ambition of that terrible trio, Alexander, Lucrezia, and Cæsar.

Almost at the same time Rome was terrified by another murder. Don Giovanni Cerviglione, a gentleman by birth and a brave soldier, captain of the pope's men-at-arms, was attacked one evening by the sbirri, as he was on his way home from supping with Don Elisio Pignatelli. One of the men asked his name, and as he pronounced it, seeing that there was no mistake, plunged a dagger into his breast, while a second man with a back stroke of his sword cut off his head, which lay actually at his feet before his body had time to fall.

The governor of Rome lodged a complaint against his assassination with the pope; but quickly perceiving, by the way his accusation was received, that he would have done better to say nothing, stopped the inquiries he had started, so that neither of the murderers was ever arrested. But the rumour was circulated that Cæsar, in the short stay he had made at Rome, had had a rendezvous with Cerviglione's wife, who was a Borgia by birth, and that her husband when he heard of this infringement of conjugal duty had been angry enough to threaten her and her lover, but the threat had reached Cæsar's ears, who, making a long arm of Machiavelli's, had, himself at Forlì, struck down Cerviglione in the streets of Rome.

Another unexpected death followed so quickly on that of Don Giovanni Cerviglione that it could not but be attributed to the same originator, if not to the same cause. Monsignore Agnelli of Mantua, auditor-legate of Romagna, clerk of the chamber and Bishop of Vilafan, having fallen into disgrace with His Holiness, how it is not known, was poisoned at his own table, at which he had passed a good part of the night in cheerful conversation with three or four persons, the poison gliding meanwhile through his veins; then going to bed in perfect health, he was found dead in the morning. His possessions were at once divided into three portions: the land and

houses were given to the Duke of Valentinois; the bishopric went to Francesco Borgia, son of Calixtus III; and the office of clerk of the chamber was sold for 5000 ducats to Ventura Bonnassai, a merchant of Siena, who produced this sum for Alexander, and settled down the very same day in the Vatican.

This last death served the purpose of determining a point of law hitherto uncertain: as Monsignore Agnelli's natural heirs had made some difficulty about being disinherited, Alexander issued a brief, whereby he took from every cardinal and every priest the right of making a will, and declared that all their property should henceforth devolve upon him.

But Cæsar was stopped short in the midst of his victories. Thanks to the 200,000 ducats that yet remained in his treasury, Ludovico Sforza had levied 500 men-at-arms from Burgundy and 8000 Swiss infantry, with whom he had entered Lombardy. So Trivulce, to face this enemy, had been compelled to call back Yves d'Alègre and the troops that Louis XII had lent to Cæsar; consequently Cæsar, leaving behind a body of pontifical soldiery as garrison at Forli and Imola, betook himself with the rest of his force to Rome.

It was Alexander's wish that his entry should be a triumph; so when he learned that the quartermasters of the army were only a few leagues from the town, he sent out runners to invite the royal am-

bassadors, the cardinals, the prelates, the Roman barons, and municipal dignitaries to make procession with all their suite to meet the Duke of Valentinois; and as it always happens that the pride of those who command is surpassed by the baseness of those who obey, the orders were not only fulfilled to the letter, but beyond it.

The entry of Cæsar took place on the 26th of February, 1500. Although this was the great Jubilee year, the festivals of the carnival began none the less for that, and were conducted in a manner even more extravagant and licentious than usual; and the conqueror after the first day prepared a new display of ostentation, which he concealed under the veil of a masquerade. As he was pleased to identify himself with the glory, genius, and fortune of the great man whose name he bore, he resolved on a representation of the triumph of Julius Cæsar, to be given on the Piazzi di Navona, the ordinary place for holding the carnival fêtes. The next day, therefore, he and his retinue started from that square, and traversed all the streets of Rome, wearing classical costumes and riding in antique cars, on one of which Cæsar stood, clad in the robe of an emperor of old, his brow crowned with a golden laurel wreath, surrounded by lictors, soldiers, and ensign-bearers, who carried banners whereon was inscribed the motto, *Aut Caesar aut nihil.*

Finally, on the fourth Sunday, in Lent, the pope conferred upon Cæsar the dignity he had so long coveted, and appointed him general and gonfaloniere of the Holy Church.

In the meanwhile Sforza had crossed the Alps and passed the Lake of Como, amid acclamations of joy from his former subjects, who had quickly lost the enthusiam that the French army and Louis's promises had inspired. These demonstrations were so noisy at Milan, that Trivulce, judging that there was no safety for a French garrison in remaining there, made his way to Novarra. Experience proved that he was not deceived; for scarcely had the Milanese observed his preparations for departure when a suppressed excitement began to spread through the town, and soon the streets were filled with armed men. This murmuring crowd had to be passed through, sword in hand and lance in rest; and scarcely had the French got outside the gates when the mob rushed out after the army into the country, pursuing them with shouts and hooting as far as the banks of the Tesino. Trivulce left 400 lances at Novarra as well as the 3000 Swiss that Yves d'Alègre had brought from the Romagna, and directed his course with the rest of the army towards Mortara, where he stopped at last to await the help he had demanded from the King of France. Behind him Cardinal Ascanio and Ludovico en-

tered Milan amid the acclamations of the whole town.

Neither of them lost any time, and wishing to profit by this enthusiasm, Ascanio undertook to besiege the castle of Milan while Ludovico should cross the Tesino and attack Novarra.

There besiegers and besieged were sons of the same nation; for Yves d'Alègre had scarcely as many as 300 French with him, and Ludovico 500 Italians. In fact, for the last sixteen years the Swiss had been practically the only infantry in Europe, and all the Powers came, purse in hand, to draw from the mighty reservoir of their mountains. The consequence was that these rude children of William Tell, put up to auction by the nations, and carried away from the humble, hardy life of a mountain people into cities of wealth and pleasure, had lost, not their ancient courage, but that rigidity of principle for which they had been distinguished before their intercourse with other nations. From being models of honour and good faith they had become a kind of marketable ware, always ready for sale to the highest bidder. The French were the first to experience this venality, which later on proved so fatal to Ludovico Sforza.

Now the Swiss in the garrison at Novarra had been in communication with their compatriots in the vanguard of the ducal army, and when they

found that they, who as a fact were unaware that Ludovico's treasure was nearly exhausted, were better fed as well as better paid than themselves, they offered to give up the town and go over to the Milanese, if they could be certain of the same pay. Ludovico, as we may well suppose, closed with this bargain. The whole of Novarra was given up to him except the citadel, which was defended by Frenchmen: thus the enemy's army was recruited by 3000 men. Then Ludovico made the mistake of stopping to besiege the castle instead of marching on to Mortara with the new reinforcement. The result of this was that Louis XII, to whom runners had been sent by Trivulce, understanding his perilous position, hastened the departure of the French gendarmerie who were already collected to cross into Italy, sent off the bailiff of Dijon to levy new Swiss forces, and ordered Cardinal Amboise, his prime minister, to cross the Alps and take up a position at Asti, to hurry on the work of collecting the troops. There the cardinal found a nest-egg of 3000 men. La Trimouille added 1500 lances and 6000 French infantry; finally, the bailiff of Dijon arrived with 10,000 Swiss; so that, counting the troops which Trivulce had at Mortara, Louis XII found himself master on the other side of the Alps of the first army any French king had ever led out to battle. Soon, by good marching, and before Lu-

dovico knew the strength or even the existence of this army, it took up a position between Novarra and Milan, cutting off all communication between the duke and his capital. He was therefore compelled, in spite of his inferior numbers, to prepare for a pitched battle.

But it so happened that just when the preparations for a decisive engagement were being made on both sides, the Swiss Diet, learning that the sons of Helvetia were on the point of cutting one another's throats, sent orders to all the Swiss serving in either army to break their engagements and return to the fatherland. But during the two months that had passed between the surrender of Novarra and the arrival of the French army before the town, there had been a very great change in the face of things, because Ludovico Sforza's treasure was now exhausted. New confabulations had gone on between the outposts, and this time, thanks to the money sent by Louis XII, it was the Swiss in the service of France who were found to be the better fed and better paid. The worthy Helvetians, since they no longer fought for their own liberty, knew the value of their blood too well to allow a single drop of it to be spilled for less than its weight in gold: the result was that, as they had betrayed Yves d'Alègre, they resolved to betray Ludovico Sforza too; and while the recruits brought in by the bailiff

of Dijon were standing firmly by the French flag, careless of the order of the Diet, Ludovico's auxiliaries declared that in fighting against their Swiss brethren they would be acting in disobedience to the Diet, and would risk capital punishment in the end—a danger that nothing would induce them to incur unless they immediately received the arrears of their pay. The duke, who had spent the last ducat he had with him, and was entirely cut off from his capital, knew that he could not get money till he had fought his way through to it, and therefore invited the Swiss to make one last effort, promising them not only the pay that was in arrears but a double hire. But unluckily the fulfilment of this promise was dependent on the doubtful issue of a battle, and the Swiss replied that they had far too much respect for their country to disobey its decree, and that they loved their brothers far too well to consent to shed their blood without reward; and therefore Sforza would do well not to count upon them, since indeed the very next day they proposed to return to their homes. The duke then saw that all was lost, but he made a last appeal to their honour, adjuring them at least to ensure his personal safety by making it a condition of capitulation. But they replied that even if a condition of such a kind would not make capitulation impossible, it would certainly deprive them of advantages which they

had a right to expect, and on which they counted as indemnification for the arrears of their pay. They pretended, however, at last that they were touched by the prayers of the man whose orders they had obeyed so long, and offered to conceal him dressed in their clothes among their ranks. This proposition was barely plausible; for Sforza was short and by this time an old man, and he could not possibly escape recognition in the midst of an army where the oldest was not past thirty and the shortest not less than five foot six. Still, this was his last chance, and he did not reject it at once, but tried to modify it so that it might help him in his straits. His plan was to disguise himself as a Franciscan monk, so that mounted on a shabby horse he might pass for their chaplain; the others, Galeazzo di San Severino, who commanded under him, and his two brothers, were all tall men, so, adopting the dress of common soldiers, they hoped they might escape detection in the Swiss ranks.

Scarcely were these plans settled when the duke heard that the capitulation was signed between Trivulce and the Swiss, who had made no stipulation in favour of him and his generals. They were to go over the next day with arms and baggage right into the French army; so the last hope of the wretched Ludovico and his generals must needs be in their disguise. And so it was. San Severino and

his brothers took their place in the ranks of the infantry, and Sforza took his among the baggage, clad in a monk's frock, with the hood pulled over his eyes.

The army marched off; but the Swiss, who had first trafficked in their blood, now trafficked in their honour. The French were warned of the disguise of Sforza and his generals, and thus they were all four recognised, and Sforza was arrested by Trimouille himself. It is said that the price paid for this treason was the town of Bellinzona; for it then belonged to the French, and when the Swiss returned to their mountains and took possession of it, Louis XII took no steps to get it back again.

When Ascanio Sforza, who, as we know, had stayed at Milan, learned the news of this cowardly desertion, he supposed that his cause was lost and that it would be the best plan for him to fly, before he found himself a prisoner in the hands of his brother's old subjects: such a change of face on the people's part would be very natural, and they might propose perhaps to purchase their own pardon at the price of his liberty; so he fled by night with the chief nobles of the Ghibelline party, taking the road to Piacenza, on his way to the kingdom of Naples. But when he arrived at Rivolta, he remembered that there was living in that town an old friend of his childhood, by name Conrad Lando, whom he

had helped to much wealth in his days of power; and as Ascanio and his companions were extremely tired, he resolved to beg his hospitality for a single night. Conrad received them with every sign of joy, putting all his house and servants at their disposal. But scarcely had they retired to bed when he sent a runner to Piacenza, to inform Carlo Orsini, at that time commanding the Venetian garrison, that he was prepared to deliver up Cardinal Ascanio and the chief men of the Milanese army. Carlo Orsini did not care to resign to another so important an expedition, and mounting hurriedly with twenty-five men, he first surrounded Conrad's house, and then entered sword in hand the chamber wherein Ascanio and his companions lay, and being surprised in the middle of their sleep, they yielded without resistance. The prisoners were taken to Venice, but Louis XII claimed them, and they were given up. Thus the King of France found himself master of Ludovico Sforza and of Ascanio, of a legitimate nephew of the great Francesco Sforza named Hermes, of two bastards named Alessandro and Cortino, and of Francesco, son of the unhappy Gian Galeazzo who had been poisoned by his uncle.

Louis XII, wishing to make an end of the whole family at a blow, forced Francesco to enter a cloister, shut up Cardinal Ascanio in the tower of Bourges, threw into prison Alessandro, Cortino, and

Hermes, and finally, after transferring the wretched Ludovico from the fortress of Pierre-Eucise to Lys-Saint-George, he relegated him for good and all to the castle of Loches, where he lived for ten years in captivity in absolute solitude and utter destitution, and there died, cursing the day when the idea first came into his head of enticing the French into Italy.

The news of the catastrophe of Ludovico and his family caused the greatest joy at Rome, for, while the French were consolidating their power in Milanese territory, the Holy See was gaining ground in the Romagna, where no further opposition was offered to Cæsar's conquest. So the runners who brought the news were rewarded with valuable presents, and it was published throughout the whole town of Rome to the sound of the trumpet and drum. The war-cry of Louis, *France, France,* and that of the Orsini, *Orso, Orso,* rang through all the streets, which in the evening were illuminated, as though Constantinople or Jerusalem had been taken. And the pope gave the people fêtes and fireworks, without troubling his head the least in the world either about its being Holy Week, or because the Jubilee had attracted more than 200,000 people to Rome; the temporal interests of his family seeming to him far more important than the spiritual interests of his subjects.

CHAPTER XI

ONE thing alone was wanting to assure the success of the vast projects that the pope and his son were founding upon the friendship of Louis and an alliance with him—that is, money. But Alexander was not the man to be troubled about a paltry worry of that kind; true, the sale of benefices was by now exhausted, the ordinary and extraordinary taxes had already been collected for the whole year, and the prospect of inheritance from cardinals and prelates was a poor thing now that the richest of them had been poisoned; but Alexander had other means at his disposal, which were none the less efficacious because they were less often used.

The first he employed was to spread a report that the Turks were threatening an invasion of Christendom, and that he knew for a positive fact that before the end of the summer Bajazet would land two considerable armies, one in Romagna, the other in Calabria; he therefore published two bulls, one to levy tithes of all ecclesiastical revenues in Europe, of whatever nature they might be, the other to force the Jews into paying an equivalent sum: both bulls

contained the severest sentences of excommunication against those who refused to submit, or attempted opposition.

The second plan was the selling of indulgences, a thing which had never been done before: these indulgences affected the people who had been prevented by reasons of health or business from coming to Rome for the Jubilee; the journey by this expedient was rendered unnecessary, and sins were pardoned for a third of what it would have cost, and just as completely as if the faithful had fulfilled every condition of the pilgrimage. For gathering in this tax a veritable army of collectors was instituted, a certain Ludovico della Torre at their head. The sum that Alexander brought into the pontifical treasury is incalculable, and some idea of it may be gathered from the fact that 799,000 livres in gold was paid in from the territory of Venice alone.

But as the Turks did as a fact make some sort of demonstration from the Hungarian side, and the Venetians began to fear that they might be coming in their direction, they asked for help from the pope, who gave orders that at twelve o'clock in the day in all his States an *Ave Maria* should be said, to pray God to avert the danger which was threatening the most serene republic. This was the only help the Venetians got from His Holiness in exchange for the 799,000 livres in gold that he had got from them.

But it seemed as though God wished to show His strange vicar on earth that He was angered by this mockery of sacred things, and on the Eve of St. Peter's Day, just as the pope was passing the Campanile on his way to the tribune of benedictions, an enormous piece of iron broke off and fell at his feet; and then, as though one warning had not been enough, on the next day, St. Peter's, when the pope happened to be in one of the rooms of his ordinary dwelling with Cardinal Capuano and Monsignore Poto, his private chamberlain, he saw through the open windows that a very black cloud was coming up. Foreseeing a thunderstorm, he ordered the cardinal and the chamberlain to shut the windows. He had not been mistaken; for even as they were obeying his command, there came up such a furious gust of wind that the highest chimney of the Vatican was overturned, just as a tree is rooted up, and was dashed upon the roof, breaking it in; smashing the upper flooring, it fell into the very room where they were. Terrified by the noise of this catastrophe, which made the whole palace tremble, the cardinal and Monsignore Poto turned round, and seeing the room full of dust and débris, sprang out upon the parapet and shouted to the guards at the gate, "The pope is dead, the pope is dead!" At this cry, the guards ran up and discovered three persons lying in the rubbish on the floor, one dead and the other two

dying. The dead man was a gentleman of Siena called Lorenzo Chigi, and the dying were two resident officials of the Vatican. They had been walking across the floor above, and had been flung down with the débris. But Alexander was not to be found; and as he gave no answer, though they kept on calling to him, the belief that he had perished was confirmed, and very soon spread about the town. But he had only fainted, and at the end of a certain time he began to come to himself, and moaned, whereupon he was discovered, dazed with the blow, and injured, though not seriously, in several parts of his body. He had been saved by little short of a miracle: a beam had broken in half and had left each of its two ends in the side walls; and one of these had formed a sort of roof over the pontifical throne; the pope, who was sitting there at the time, was protected by this overarching beam, and had received only a few contusions.

The two contradictory reports of the sudden death and the miraculous preservation of the pope spread rapidly through Rome; and the Duke of Valentinois, terrified at the thought of what a change might be wrought in his own fortunes by any slight accident to the Holy Father, hurried to the Vatican, unable to assure himself by anything less than the evidence of his own eyes. Alexander desired to render public thanks to Heaven for the protection that had been

granted him, and on the very same day was carried to the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, escorted by a numerous procession of prelates and men-at-arms, his pontifical seat borne by two valets, two equerries, and two grooms. In this church were buried the Duke of Gandia and Gian Borgia, and perhaps Alexander was drawn thither by some relics of devotion, or may be by the recollection of his love for his former mistress, Rosa Vanozza, whose image, in the guise of the Madonna, was exposed for the veneration of the faithful in a chapel on the left of the high altar. Stopping before this altar, the pope offered to the church the gift of a magnificent chalice in which were three hundred gold crowns, which the Cardinal of Siena poured out into a silver paten before the eyes of all, much to the gratification of the pontifical vanity.

But before he left Rome to complete the conquest of the Romagna, the Duke of Valentinois had been reflecting that the marriage, once so ardently desired, between Lucrezia and Alfonso had been quite useless to himself and his father. There was more than this to be considered: Louis XII's rest in Lombardy was only a halt, and Milan was evidently but the stage before Naple. It was very possible that Louis was annoyed about the marriage which converted his enemy's nephew into the son-in-law of his ally. Whereas, if Alfonso were dead, Lucrezia would be

in the position to marry some powerful lord of Ferrara or Brescia, who would be able to help his brother-in-law in the conquest of Romagna. Alfonso was now not only useless but dangerous, which to anyone with the character of the Borgias perhaps seemed worse. The death of Alfonso was resolved upon. But Lucrezia's husband, who had understood for a long time past what danger he incurred by living near his terrible father-in-law, had retired to Naples. Since, however, neither Alexander nor Cæsar had changed in their perpetual dissimulation towards him, he was beginning to lose his fear, when he received an invitation from the pope and his son to take part in a bull-fight which was to be held in the Spanish fashion in honour of the duke before his departure. In the present precarious position of Naples it would not have been good policy for Alfonso to afford Alexander any sort of pretext for a rupture, so he would not refuse without a motive, and betook himself to Rome. It was thought of no use to consult Lucrezia in this affair, for she had two or three times displayed an absurd attachment for her husband, and they left her undisturbed in her government of Spoleto.

Alfonso was received by the pope and the duke with every demonstration of sincere friendship, and rooms in the Vatican were assigned to him that he had inhabited before with Lucrezia, in that

part of the building which is known as the Torre Nuova.

Great lists were prepared on the Piazza of St. Peter's; the streets about it were barricaded, and the windows of the surrounding houses served as boxes for the spectators. The pope and his court took their places on the balconies of the Vatican.

The fête was started by professional toreadors: after they had exhibited their strength and skill, Alfonso and Cæsar in their turn descended to the arena, and to offer a proof of their mutual kindness, settled that the bull which pursued Cæsar should be killed by Alfonso, and the bull that pursued Alfonso by Cæsar.

Then Cæsar remained alone on horseback within the lists, Alfonso going out by an improvised door which was kept ajar, in order that he might go back on the instant if he judged that his presence was necessary. At the same time, from the opposite side of the lists the bull was introduced, and was at the same moment pierced all over with darts and arrows, some of them containing explosives, which took fire, and irritated the bull to such a point that he rolled about with pain, and then got up in a fury, and perceiving a man on horseback, rushed instantly upon him. It was now, in this narrow arena, pursued by his swift enemy, that Cæsar displayed all that skill which made him one of the finest horsemen

of the period. Still, clever as he was, he could not have remained safe long in that restricted area from an adversary against whom he had no other resource than flight, had not Alfonso appeared suddenly, just when the bull was beginning to gain upon him, waving a red cloak in his left hand, and holding in his right a long delicate Aragon sword. It was high time: the bull was only a few paces distant from Cæsar, and the risk he was running appeared so imminent that a woman's scream was heard from one of the windows. But at the sight of a man on foot the bull stopped short, and judging that he would do better business with the new enemy than the old one, he turned upon him instead. For a moment he stood motionless, roaring, kicking up the dust with his hind feet, and lashing his sides with his tail. Then he rushed upon Alfonso, his eyes all bloodshot, his horns tearing up the ground. Alfonso awaited him with a tranquil air; then, when he was only three paces away, he made a bound to one side, and presented instead of his body his sword, which disappeared at once to the hilt; the bull, checked in the middle of his onslaught, stopped one instant motionless and trembling, then fell upon his knees, uttered one dull roar, and lying down on the very spot where his course had been checked, breathed his last without moving a single step forward.

Applause resounded on all sides, so rapid and

clever had been the blow. Cæsar had remained on horseback, seeking to discover the fair spectator who had given so lively a proof of her interest in him, without troubling himself about what was going on: his search had not been unrewarded, for he had recognized one of the maids of honour to Elizabeth, Duchess of Urbino, who was betrothed to Gian Battista Carraciuolo, captain-general of the republic of Venice.

It was now Alfonso's turn to run from the bull, Cæsar's to fight him: the young men changed parts, and when four mules had reluctantly dragged the dead bull from the arena, and the valets and other servants of His Holiness had scattered sand over the places that were stained with blood, Alfonso mounted a magnificent Andalusian steed of Arab origin, light as the wind of Sahara that had wedded with his mother, while Cæsar, dismounting, retired in his turn, to reappear at the moment when Alfonso should be meeting the same danger from which he had just now rescued him.

Then a second bull was introduced upon the scene, excited in the same manner with steeled darts and flaming arrows. Like his predecessor, when he perceived a man on horseback he rushed upon him, and then began a marvellous race, in which it was impossible to see, so quickly did they fly over the ground, whether the horse was pursuing the bull or

the bull the horse. But after five or six rounds, the bull began to gain upon the son of Araby, for all his speed, and it was plain to see who fled and who pursued; in another moment there was only the length of two lances between them, and then suddenly Cæsar appeared, armed with one of those long two-handed swords which the French are accustomed to use, and just when the bull, almost close upon Don Alfonso, came in front of Cæsar he brandished the sword, which flashed like lightning, and cut off his head, while his body, impelled by the speed of the run, fell to the ground ten paces farther on. This blow was so unexpected, and had been performed with such dexterity, that it was received not with mere clapping but with wild enthusiasm and frantic outcry. Cæsar, apparently remembering nothing else in his hour of triumph but the scream that had been caused by his former danger, picked up the bull's head, and, giving it to one of his equerries, ordered him to lay it as an act of homage at the feet of the fair Venetian who had bestowed upon him so lively a sign of interest. This fête, besides affording a triumph to each of the young men, had another end as well; it was meant to prove to the populace that perfect goodwill existed between the two, since each had saved the life of the other. The result was that, if any accident should happen to Cæsar, nobody would dream of accusing Alfonso;

and also if any accident should happen to Alfonso, nobody would dream of accusing Cæsar.

There was a supper at the Vatican. Alfonso made an elegant toilet, and about ten o'clock at night prepared to go from the quarters he inhabited into those where the pope lived; but the door which separated the two courts of the building was shut, and knock as he would, no one came to open it. Alfonso then thought that it was a simple matter for him to go round by the Piazza of St. Peter's; so he went out unaccompanied through one of the garden gates of the Vatican and made his way across the gloomy streets which led to the stairway which gave on the piazza. But scarcely had he set his foot on the first step when he was attacked by a band of armed men. Alfonso would have drawn his sword; but before it was out of the scabbard he had received two blows from a halberd, one on his head, the other on his shoulder; he was stabbed in the side, and wounded both in the leg and in the temple. Struck down by these five blows, he lost his footing and fell to the ground unconscious; his assassins, supposing he was dead, at once remounted the stairway, and found on the piazza forty horsemen waiting for them: by them they were calmly escorted from the city by the Porta Portesa. Alfonso was found at the point of death, but not actually dead, by some passers-by, some of whom recognised him,

and instantly conveyed the news of his assassination to the Vatican, while the others, lifting the wounded man in their arms, carried him to his quarters in the Torre Nuova. The pope and Cæsar, who learned this news just as they were sitting down to table, showed great distress, and leaving their companions, at once went to see Alfonso, to be quite certain whether his wounds were fatal or not; and on the next morning, to divert any suspicion that might be turned towards themselves, they arrested Alfonso's maternal uncle, Francesco Gazella, who had come to Rome in his nephew's company. Gazella was found guilty on the evidence of false witnesses, and was consequently beheaded.

But they had only accomplished half of what they wanted. By some means, fair or foul, suspicion had been sufficiently diverted from the true assassins; but Alfonso was not dead, and, thanks to the strength of his constitution and the skill of his doctors, who had taken the lamentations of the pope and Cæsar quite seriously, and thought to please them by curing Alexander's son-in-law, the wounded man was making progress towards convalescence: news arrived at the same time that Lucrezia had heard of her husband's accident, and was starting to come and nurse him herself. There was no time to lose, and Cæsar summoned Michelotto.

"The same night," says Burcardus, "Don Al-

fonso, who would not die of his wounds, was found strangled in his bed."

The funeral took place the next day with a ceremony not unbecoming in itself, though unsuited to his high rank. Don Francesca Borgia, Archbishop of Cosenza, acted as chief mourner at St. Peter's, where the body was buried in the chapel of Santa Maria delle Febbre.

Lucrezia arrived the same evening: she knew her father and brother too well to be put on the wrong scent; and although, immediately after Alfonso's death, the Duke of Valentinois had arrested the doctors, the surgeons, and a poor deformed wretch who had been acting as valet, she knew perfectly well from what quarter the blow had proceeded. In fear, therefore, that the manifestation of a grief she felt this time too well might alienate the confidence of her father and brother, she retired to Nepi with her whole household, her whole court, and more than six hundred cavaliers, there to spend the period of her mourning.

This important family business was now settled, and Lucrezia was again a widow, and in consequence ready to be utilised in the pope's new political machinations. Cæsar only stayed at Rome to receive the ambassadors from France and Venice; but as their arrival was somewhat delayed, and considerable inroads had been made upon the pope's treasury

by the recent festivities, the creation of twelve new cardinals was arranged: this scheme was to have two effects, viz., to bring 600,000 ducats into the pontifical chest, each hat having been priced at 50,000 ducats, and to assure the pope of a constant majority in the sacred council.

The ambassadors at last arrived: the first was M. de Villeneuve, the same who had come before to see the Duke of Valentinois in the name of France. Just as he entered Rome, he met on the road a masked man, who, without removing his domino, expressed the joy he felt at his arrival. This man was Cæsar himself, who did not wish to be recognised, and who took his departure after a short conference without uncovering his face. M. de Villeneuve then entered the city after him, and at the Porta del Popolo found the ambassadors of the various Powers, and among them those of Spain and Naples, whose sovereigns were not yet, it is true, in declared hostility to France, though there was already some coolness. The last-named, fearing to compromise themselves, merely said to their colleague of France, by way of complimentary address, "Sir, you are welcome"; whereupon the master of the ceremonies, surprised at the brevity of the greeting, asked if they had nothing else to say. When they replied that they had not, M. de Villeneuve turned his back upon them, remarking that

those who had nothing to say required no answer: he then took his place between the Archbishop of Reggia, governor of Rome, and the Archbishop of Ragusa, and made his way to the palace of the Holy Apostles, which had been got ready for his reception.

Some days later, Maria Giorgi, ambassador extraordinary of Venice, made his arrival. He was commissioned not only to arrange the business on hand with the pope, but also to convey to Alexander and Cæsar the title of Venetian nobles, and to inform them that their names were inscribed in the Golden Book—a favour that both of them had long coveted, less for the empty honour's sake than for the new influence that this title might confer. Then the pope went on to bestow the twelve cardinals' hats that had been sold. The new princes of the Church were Don Diego de Mendoza, archbishop of Seville; Jacques, archbishop of Oristagny, the Pope's vicar-general; Thomas, archbishop of Strigonia; Piero, archbishop of Reggio, governor of Rome; Francesco Borgia, archbishop of Cosenza, treasurer-general; Gian, archbishop of Salerno, vice-chamberlain; Luigi Borgia, archbishop of Valencia, secretary to His Holiness, and brother of the Gian Borgia whom Cæsar had poisoned; Antonia, bishop of Como; Gian Battista Ferraro, bishop of Modena; Amédée d'Albret, son of the King of Navarre, brother-in-

law of the Duke of Valentinois; and Marco Cornaro, a Venetian noble, in whose person His Holiness rendered back to the most serene republic the favour he had just received.

Then, as there was nothing further to detain the Duke of Valentinois at Rome, he only waited to effect a loan from a rich banker named Agostino Chigi, brother of the Lorenzo Chigi who had perished on the day when the pope had been nearly killed by the fall of a chimney, and departed for the Romagna, accompanied by Vitellozzo Vitelli, Gian Paolo Baglione, and Jacopo di Santa Croce, at that time his friends, but later on his victims.

His first enterprise was against Pesaro: this was the polite attention of a brother-in-law, and Gian Sforza very well knew what would be its consequences; for instead of attempting to defend his possessions by taking up arms, or to venture on negotiations, unwilling moreover to expose the fair lands he had ruled so long to the vengeance of an irritated foe, he begged his subjects to preserve their former affection towards himself, in the hope of better days to come; and he fled into Dalmatia. Malatesta, lord of Rimini, followed his example; thus the Duke of Valentinois entered both these towns without striking a single blow. Cæsar left a sufficient garrison behind him, and marched on to Faenza.

But there the face of things was changed: Faenza at that time was under the rule of Astor Manfredi, a brave and handsome young man of eighteen, who, relying on the love of his subjects towards his family, had resolved on defending himself to the uttermost, although he had been forsaken by the Bentivogli, his near relatives, and by his allies, the Venetians and Florentines, who had not dared to send him any aid because of the affection felt towards Cæsar by the King of France. Accordingly, when he perceived that the Duke of Valentinois was marching against him, he assembled in hot haste all those of his vassals who were capable of bearing arms, together with the few foreign soldiers who were willing to come into his pay, and collecting victual and ammunition, he took up his position with them inside the town.

By these defensive preparations Cæsar was not greatly disconcerted; he commanded a magnificent army, composed of the finest troops of France and Italy, led by such men as Paolo and Giulio Orsini, Vitellozzo Vitelli and Paolo Baglione, not to speak of himself—that is to say, by the first captains of the period. So, after he had reconnoitred, he at once began the siege, pitching his camp between the two rivers, Amona and Marziano, placing his artillery on the side which faces on Forli, at which point the besieged party had erected a powerful bastion.

At the end of a few days busy with entrenchments,

the breach became practicable, and the Duke of Valentinois ordered an assault, and gave the example to his soldiers by being the first to march against the enemy. But in spite of his courage and that of his captains beside him, Astor Manfredi made so good a defence that the besiegers were repulsed with great loss of men, while one of their bravest leaders, Honorio Savello, was left behind in the trenches.

But Faenza, in spite of the courage and devotion of her defenders, could not have held out long against so formidable an army, had not winter come to her aid. Surprised by the rigour of the season, with no houses for protection and no trees for fuel, as the peasants had destroyed both beforehand, the Duke of Valentinois was forced to raise the siege and take up his winter quarters in the neighbouring towns, in order to be quite ready for a return next spring; for Cæsar could not forgive the insult of being held in check by a little town which had enjoyed a long time of peace, was governed by a mere boy, and deprived of all outside aid, and had sworn to take his revenge. He therefore broke up his army into three sections, sent one-third to Imola, the second to Forli, and himself took the third to Cesena, a third-rate town, which was thus suddenly transformed into a city of pleasure and luxury.

Indeed, for Cæsar's active spirit there must needs

be no cessation of warfare or festivities. So, when war was interrupted, fêtes began, as magnificent and as exciting as he knew how to make them: the days were passed in games and displays of horsemanship, the nights in dancing and gallantry; for the loveliest women of the Romagna—and that is to say of the whole world—had come hither to make a seraglio for the victor which might have been envied by the Sultan of Egypt or the Emperor of Constantinople.

While the Duke of Valentinois was making one of his excursions in the neighbourhood of the town with his retinue of flattering nobles and titled courtesans, who were always about him, he noticed a cortège on the Rimini road so numerous that it must surely indicate the approach of someone of importance. Cæsar, soon perceiving that the principal person was a woman, approached, and recognised the very same lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Urbino who, on the day of the bull-fight, had screamed when Cæsar was all but touched by the infuriated beast. At this time she was betrothed, as we mentioned, to Gian Carracciuolo, general of the Venetians. Elizabeth of Gonzaga, her protectress and godmother, was now sending her with a suitable retinue to Venice, where the marriage was to take place.

Cæsar had already been struck by the beauty of this young girl, when at Rome; but when he saw her again she appeared more lovely than on the first

occasion, so he resolved on the instant that he would keep this fair flower of love for himself: having often before reproached himself for his indifference in passing her by. Therefore he saluted her as an old acquaintance, inquired whether she were staying any time at Cesena, and ascertained that she was only passing through, travelling by long stages, as she was awaited with much impatience, and that she would spend the coming night at Forli. This was all that Cæsar cared to know; he summoned Michelotto, and in a low voice said a few words to him, which were heard by no one else.

The cortège only made a halt at the neighbouring town, as the fair bride had said, and started at once for Forli, although the day was already far advanced; but scarcely had a league been covered when a troop of horsemen from Cesena overtook and surrounded them. Although the soldiers in the escort were far from being in sufficient force, they were eager to defend their general's bride; but soon some fell dead, and others, terrified, took to flight; and when the lady came down from her litter to try to escape, the chief seized her in his arms and set her in front of him on his horse; then, ordering his men to return to Cesena without him, he put his horse to the gallop in a cross direction, and as the shades of evening were now beginning to fall, he soon disappeared into the darkness.

Carracciuolo learned the news through one of the fugitives, who declared that he had recognised among the ravishers the Duke of Valentinois' soldiers. At first he thought his ears had deceived him, so hard was it to believe this terrible intelligence; but it was repeated, and he stood for one instant motionless, and, as it were, thunderstruck; then suddenly, with a cry of vengeance, he threw off his stupor and dashed away to the ducal palace, where sat the Doge Barberigo and the Council of Ten; unannounced, he rushed into their midst, the very moment after they had heard of Cæsar's outrage.

"Most serene lords," he cried, "I am come to bid you farewell, for I am resolved to sacrifice my life to my private vengeance, though indeed I had hoped to devote it to the service of the republic. I have been wounded in the soul's noblest part—in my honour. The dearest thing I possessed, my wife, has been stolen from me, and the thief is the most treacherous, the most impious, the most infamous of men, it is Valentinois! My lords, I beg you will not be offended if I speak thus of a man whose boast it is to be a member of your noble ranks and to enjoy your protection: it is not so; he lies, and his loose and criminal life has made him unworthy of such honours, even as he is unworthy of the life whereof my sword shall deprive him. In

truth, his very birth was a sacrilege; he is a fratricide, an usurper of the goods of other men, an oppressor of the innocent, and a highway assassin; he is a man who will violate every law, even the law of hospitality respected by the veriest barbarian, a man who will do violence to a virgin who is passing through his own country, where she had every right to expect from him not only the consideration due to her sex and condition, but also that which is due to the most serene republic, whose condottiere I am, and which is insulted in my person and in the dishonouring of my bride; this man, I say, merits indeed to die by another hand than mine. Yet, since he who ought to punish him is not for him a prince and judge, but only a father quite as guilty as the son, I myself will seek him out, and I will sacrifice my own life, not only in avenging my own injury and the blood of so many innocent beings, but also in promoting the welfare of the most serene republic, on which it is his ambition to trample when he has accomplished the ruin of the other princes of Italy."

The doge and the senators, who, as we said, were already apprised of the event that had brought Carracciuolo before them, listened with great interest and profound indignation; for they, as he told them, were themselves insulted in the person of their general: they all swore, on their honour, that

if he would put the matter in their hands, and not yield to his rage, which could only work his own undoing, either his bride should be rendered up to him without a smirch upon her bridal veil, or else a punishment should be dealt out proportioned to the affront. And without delay, as a proof of the energy wherewith the noble tribunal would take action in the affair, Luigi Manenti, secretary to the Ten, was sent to Imola, where the duke was reported to be, that he might explain to him the great displeasure with which the most serene republic viewed the outrage perpetrated upon their condottiere. At the same time the Council of Ten and the doge sought out the French ambassador, entreating him to join with them and repair in person with Manenti to the Duke of Valentinois, and summon him, in the name of King Louis XII, immediately to send back to Venice the lady he had carried off.

The two messengers arrived at Imola, where they found Cæsar, who listened to their complaint with every mark of utter astonishment, denying that he had been in any way connected with the crime, nay, authorising Manenti and the French ambassador to pursue the culprits and promising that he would himself have the most active search carried on. The duke appeared to act in such complete good faith that the envoys were for the moment hoodwinked,

and themselves undertook a search of the most careful nature. They accordingly repaired to the exact spot and began to procure information. On the highroad there had been found dead and wounded. A man had been seen going by at a gallop, carrying a woman in distress on his saddle; he had soon left the beaten track and plunged across country. A peasant coming home from working in the fields had seen him appear and vanish again like a shadow, taking the direction of a lonely house. An old woman declared that she had seen him go into this house. But the next night the house was gone, as though by enchantment, and the ploughshare had passed over where it stood; so that none could say what had become of her whom they sought, for those who had dwelt in the house, and even the house itself, were there no longer.

Manenti and the French ambassador returned to Venice, and related what the duke had said, what they had done, and how all search had been in vain. No one doubted that Cæsar was the culprit, but no one could prove it. So the most serene republic, which could not, considering their war with the Turks, be embroiled with the pope, forbade Caracciuolo to take any sort of private vengeance, and so the talk grew gradually less, and at last the occurrence was no more mentioned.

But the pleasures of the winter had not diverted

Cæsar's mind from his plans about Faenza. Scarcely did the spring season allow him to go into the country than he marched anew upon the town, camped opposite the castle, and making a new breach, ordered a general assault, himself going up first of all; but in spite of the courage he personally displayed, and the able seconding of his soldiers, they were repulsed by Astor, who, at the head of his men, defended the breach, while even the women, at the top of the rampart, rolled down stones and trunks of trees upon the besiegers. After an hour's struggle man to man, Cæsar was forced to retire, leaving two thousand men in the trenches about the town, and among the two thousand one of his bravest condottieri, Valentino Farnese.

Then, seeing that neither excommunications nor assaults could help him, Cæsar converted the siege into a blockade: all the roads leading to Faenza were cut off, all communications stopped; and further, as various signs of revolt had been remarked at Cesena, a governor was installed there whose powerful will was well known to Cæsar, Ramiro d'Orco, with powers of life and death over the inhabitants; he then waited quietly before Faenza, till hunger should drive out the citizens from those walls they defended with such vehement enthusiasm. At the end of a month, during which the people of Faenza had suffered all the horrors of famine, delegates

came out to parley with Cæsar with a view to capitulation. Cæsar, who still had plenty to do in the Romagna, was less hard to satisfy than might have been expected, and the town yielded on condition that he should not touch either the persons or the belongings of the inhabitants, that Astor Manfredi, the youthful ruler, should have the privilege of retiring whenever he pleased, and should enjoy the revenue of his patrimony wherever he might be.

The conditions were faithfully kept so far as the inhabitants were concerned; but Cæsar, when he had seen Astor, whom he did not know before, was seized by a strange passion for this beautiful youth, who was like a woman: he kept him by his side in his own army, showing him honours befitting a young prince, and evincing before the eyes of all the strongest affection for him: one day Astor disappeared, just as Caracciuolo's bride had disappeared, and no one knew what had become of him; Cæsar himself appeared very uneasy, saying that he had no doubt made his escape somewhere, and in order to give credence to this story, he sent out couriers to seek him in all directions.

A year after this double disappearance, there was picked up in the Tiber, a little below the Castle Sant' Angelo, the body of a beautiful young woman, her hands bound together behind her back, and also the corpse of a handsome youth with the bowstring he

had been strangled with tied round his neck. The girl was Caracciuolo's bride, the young man was Astor.

During the last year both had been the slaves of Cæsar's pleasures; now, tired of them, he had had them thrown into the Tiber.

The capture of Faenza had brought Cæsar the title of Duke of Romagna, which was first bestowed on him by the pope in full consistory, and afterwards ratified by the King of Hungary, the republic of Venice, and the Kings of Castile and Portugal. The news of the ratification arrived at Rome on the eve of the day on which the people are accustomed to keep the anniversary of the foundation of the Eternal City; this fête, which went back to the days of Pomponius Lætus, acquired a new splendour in their eyes from the joyful events that had just happened to their sovereign. As a sign of joy cannon were fired all day long; in the evening there were illuminations and bonfires, and during part of the night the Prince of Squillace, with the chief lords of the Roman nobility, marched about the streets, bearing torches, and exclaiming, "Long live Alexander! Long live Cæsar! Long live the Borgias! Long live the Orsini! Long live the Duke of Romagna!"

CHAPTER XII

CÆSAR'S ambition was only fed by victories: scarcely was he master of Faenza before, excited by the Mariscotti, old enemies of the Bentivoglio family, he cast his eyes upon Bologna; but Gian di Bentivoglio, whose ancestors had possessed this town from time immemorial, had not only made all preparations necessary for a long resistance, but he had also put himself under the protection of France; so, scarcely had he learned that Cæsar was crossing the frontier of the Bolognese territory with his army, than he sent a courier to Louis XII to claim the fulfilment of his promise. Louis kept it with his accustomed good faith; and when Cæsar arrived before Bologna, he received an intimation from the King of France that he was not to enter on any undertaking against his ally Bentivoglio; Cæsar, not being the man to have his plans upset for nothing, made conditions for his retreat, to which Bentivoglio consented, only too happy to be quit of him at this price: the conditions were the cession of Castello Bolognese, a fortress between Imola and Faenza, the payment of a tribute of 9000 ducats, and the keeping for his service of a hundred men-at-

arms and two thousand infantry. In exchange for these favours, Cæsar confided to Bentivoglio that his visit had been due to the counsels of the Mariscotti; then, reinforced by his new ally's contingent, he took the road for Tuscany. But he was scarcely out of sight when Bentivoglio shut the gates of Bologna, and commanded his son Hermes to assassinate with his own hand Agamemnon Mariscotti, the head of the family, and ordered the massacre of four-and-thirty of his near relatives, brothers, sons, daughters, and nephews, and two hundred other of his kindred and friends. The butchery was carried out by the noblest youths of Bologna, whom Bentivoglio forced to bathe their hands in this blood, so that he might attach them to himself through their fear of reprisals.

Cæsar's plans with regard to Florence were now no longer a mystery: since the month of January he had sent to Pisa ten or twelve hundred men under the Command of Regniero della Sassetta and Piero di Gamba Corti, and as soon as the conquest of the Romagna was complete, he had further despatched Oliverotto di Fermo with new detachments. His own army he had reinforced, as we have seen, by a hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry; he had just been joined by Vitellozzo Vitelli, lord of Città di Castello, and by the Orsini, who had brought him another two or three thou-

sand men; so, without counting the troops sent to Pisa, he had under his control seven hundred men-at-arms and five thousand infantry.

Still, in spite of this formidable company, he entered Tuscany declaring that his intentions were only pacific, protesting that he only desired to pass through the territories of the republic on his way to Rome, and offering to pay in ready money for any victual his army might require. But when he had passed the defiles of the mountains and arrived at Barberino, feeling that the town was in his power and nothing could now hinder his approach, he began to put a price on the friendship he had at first offered freely, and to impose his own conditions instead of accepting those of others. These were that Piero dei Medici, kinsman and ally of the Orsini, should be reinstated in his ancient power; that six Florentine citizens, to be chosen by Vitellozzo, should be put into his hands that they might by their death expiate that of Paolo Vitelli, unjustly executed by the Florentines; that the Signoria should engage to give no aid to the lord of Piombino, whom Cæsar intended to dispossess of his estates without delay; and further, that he himself should be taken into the service of the republic, for a pay proportionate to his deserts. But just as Cæsar had reached this point in his negotiations with Florence, he received orders from Louis XII

to get ready, so soon as he conveniently could, to follow him with his army and help in the conquest of Naples, which he was at last in a position to undertake. Cæsar dared not break his word to so powerful an ally; he therefore replied that he was at the king's orders, and as the Florentines were not aware that he was quitting them on compulsion, he sold his retreat for the sum of 36,000 ducats per annum, in exchange for which sum he was to hold three hundred men-at-arms always in readiness to go to the aid of the republic at her earliest call and in any circumstances of need.

But, hurried as he was, Cæsar still hoped that he might find time to conquer the territory of Piombino as he went by, and take the capital by a single vigorous stroke; so he made his entry into the lands of Jacopo IV of Appiano. The latter, he found, however, had been beforehand with him, and, to rob him of all resource, had laid waste his own country, burned his fodder, felled his trees, torn down his vines, and destroyed a few fountains that produced salubrious waters. This did not hinder Cæsar from seizing in the space of a few days Severeto, Scarlino, the isle of Elba, and La Pianosa; but he was obliged to stop short at the castle, which opposed a serious resistance. As Louis XII's army was continuing its way towards Rome, and he received a fresh order to join it, he took his departure the next day, leav-

ing behind him Vitellozzo and Gian Paolo Baglioni to prosecute the siege in his absence.

Louis XII was this time advancing upon Naples, not with the incautious ardour of Charles VIII, but, on the contrary, with that prudence and circumspection which characterised him. Besides his alliance with Florence and Rome, he had also signed a secret treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic, who had similar pretensions, through the house of Duras, to the throne of Naples to those Louis himself had through the house of Anjou. By this treaty the two kings were sharing their conquests beforehand: Louis would be master of Naples, of the town of Lavore and the Abruzzi, and would bear the title of King of Naples and Jerusalem; Ferdinand reserved for his own share Apulia and Calabria, with the title of Duke of these provinces; both were to receive the investiture from the pope and to hold them of him. This partition was all the more likely to be made, in fact, because Frederic, supposing all the time that Ferdinand was his good and faithful friend, would open the gates of his towns, only to receive into his fortresses conquerors and masters instead of allies. All this perhaps was not very loyal conduct on the part of a king who had so long desired and had just now received the surname of Catholic, but it mattered little to Louis, who profited by treasonable acts he did not have to share.

The French army, which the Duke of Valentinois had just joined, consisted of 1000 lances, 4000 Swiss, and 6000 Gascons and adventurers; further, Philip of Rabenstein was bringing by sea six Breton and Provençal vessels, and three Genoese caracks, carrying 6500 invaders.

Against this mighty host the King of Naples had only 700 men-at-arms, 600 light horse, and 6000 infantry under the command of the Colonna, whom he had taken into his pay after they were exiled by the pope from the States of the Church; but he was counting on Gonsalvo of Cordova, who was to join him at Gaeta, and to whom he had confidingly opened all his fortresses in Calabria.

But the feeling of safety inspired by Frederic's faithless ally was not destined to endure long: on their arrival at Rome, the French and Spanish ambassadors presented to the pope the treaty signed at Grenada on the 11th of November, 1500, between Louis XII and Ferdinand the Catholic, a treaty which up to that time had been secret. Alexander, foreseeing the probable future, had, by the death of Alfonso, loosened all the bonds that attached him to the house of Aragon, and then began by making some difficulty about it. It was demonstrated that the arrangement had only been undertaken to provide the Christian princes with another weapon for attacking the Ottoman Empire, and

before this consideration, one may readily suppose, all the pope's scruples vanished; on the 25th of June, therefore, it was decided to call a consistory which was to declare Frederic deposed from the throne of Naples. When Frederic heard all at once that the French army had arrived at Rome, that his ally Ferdinand had deceived him, and that Alexander had pronounced the sentence of his downfall, he understood that all was lost; but he did not wish it to be said that he had abandoned his kingdom without even attempting to save it. So he charged his two new condottieri, Fabrizio Colonna and Ranuzio di Marciano, to check the French before Capua with 300 men-at-arms, some light horse, and 3000 infantry; in person he occupied Aversa with another division of his army, while Prospero Colonna was sent to defend Naples with the rest, and make a stand against the Spaniards on the side of Calabria.

These dispositions were scarcely made when d'Aubigny, having passed the Volturno, approached to lay siege to Capua, and invested the town on both sides of the river. Scarcely were the French encamped before the ramparts than they began to set up their batteries, which were soon in play, much to the terror of the besieged, who, poor creatures, were almost all strangers to the town, and had fled thither from every side, expecting to find protec-

tion beneath the walls. So, although bravely repulsed by Fabrizio Colonna, the French, from the moment of their first assault, inspired so great and blind a terror that everyone began to talk of opening the gates, and it was only with great difficulty that Colonna made this multitude understand that at least they ought to reap some benefit from the check the besiegers had received and obtain good terms of capitulation. When he had brought them round to his view, he sent out to demand a parley with d'Aubigny, and a conference was fixed for the next day but one, in which they were to treat of the surrender of the town.

But this was not Cæsar Borgia's idea at all: he had stayed behind to confer with the pope, and had joined the French army with some of his troops on the very day on which the conference had been arranged for two days later: and a capitulation of any nature would rob him of his share of the booty and the promise of such pleasure as would come from the capture of a city so rich and populous as Capua. So he opened up negotiations on his own account with a captain who was on guard at one of the gates: such negotiations, made with cunning supported by bribery, proved as usual more prompt and efficacious than any others. At the very moment when Fabrizio Colonna in a fortified outpost was discussing the conditions of capitulation with the French captains, sud-

denly great cries of distress were heard. These were caused by Borgia, who without a word to anyone had entered the town with his faithful army from Romagna, and was beginning to cut the throats of the garrison, which had naturally somewhat relaxed their vigilance in the belief that the capitulation was all but signed. The French, when they saw that the town was half taken, rushed on the gates with such impetuosity that the besieged did not even attempt to defend themselves any longer, and forced their way into Capua by three separate sides: nothing more could be done then to stop the issue. Butchery and pillage had begun, and the work of destruction must needs be completed: in vain did Fabrizio Colonna, Ranuzio di Marciano, and Don Ugo di Cardona attempt to make head against the French and Spaniards with such men as they could get together. Fabrizio Colonna and Don Ugo were made prisoners; Ranuzio, wounded by an arrow, fell into the hands of the Duke of Valentinois; seven thousand inhabitants were massacred in the streets, among them the traitor who had given up the gate; the churches were pillaged, the convents of nuns forced open; and then might be seen the spectacle of some of these holy virgins casting themselves into pits or into the river to escape the soldiers. Three hundred of the noblest ladies of the town took refuge in a tower. The Duke of Valentinois broke

in the doors, chose out for himself forty of the most beautiful, and handed over the rest to his army.

The pillage continued for three days.

Capua once taken, Frederic saw that it was useless any longer to attempt defence. So he shut himself up in Castel Nuovo and gave permission to Gaeta and to Naples to treat with the conqueror. Gaeta bought immunity from pillage with 60,000 ducats, and Naples with the surrender of the castle. This surrender was made to d'Aubigny by Frederic himself, on condition that he should be allowed to take to the island of Ischia his money, jewels, and furniture, and there remain with his family for six months secure from all hostile attack. The terms of this capitulation were faithfully adhered to on both sides: d'Aubigny entered Naples, and Frederic retired to Ischia.

Thus, by a last terrible blow, never to rise again, fell this branch of the house of Aragon, which had now reigned for sixty-five years. Frederic, its head, demanded and obtained a safe-conduct to pass into France, where Louis XII gave him the duchy of Anjou and 30,000 ducats a year, on condition that he should never quit the kingdom; and there, in fact, he died, on the 9th of September 1504. His eldest son, Don Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, retired to Spain, where he was permitted to marry twice, but each time with a woman who was known to be

barren; and there he died in 1550. Alfonso, the second son, who had followed his father to France, died, it is said, of poison, at Grenoble, at the age of twenty-two; lastly Cæsar, the third son, died at Ferrara, before he had attained his eighteenth birthday.

Frederic's daughter Charlotte married in France Nicholas, Count of Laval, governor and admiral of Brittany; a daughter was born of this marriage, Anne de Laval, who married Francois de la Trimouille. Through her those rights were transmitted to the house of La Trimouille which were used later on as a claim upon the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The capture of Naples gave the Duke of Valentinois his liberty again; so he left the French army, after he had received fresh assurances on his own account of the king's friendliness, and returned to the siege of Piombino, which he had been forced to interrupt. During this interval Alexander had been visiting the scenes of his son's conquests, and traversing all the Romagna with Lucrezia, who was now consoled for her husband's death, and had never before enjoyed quite so much favour with His Holiness; so, when she returned to Rome, she no longer had separate rooms from him. The result of this recrudescence of affection was the appearance of two pontifical bulls, converting the towns of Nepi

and Sermoneta into duchies: one was bestowed on Gian Borgia, an illegitimate child of the pope, who was not the son of either of his mistresses, Rosa Vanozza or Giulia Farnese, the other on Don Roderigo of Aragon, son of Lucrezia and Alfonso: the lands of the Colonna were in appanage to the two duchies.

But Alexander was dreaming of yet another addition to his fortune; this was to come from a marriage between Lucrezia and Don Alfonso d'Este, son of Duke Hercules of Ferrara, in favour of which alliance Louis XII had negotiated.

His Holiness was now having a run of good fortune, and he learned on the same day that Piombino was taken and that Duke Hercules had given the King of France his assent to the marriage. Both of these pieces of news were good for Alexander, but the one could not compare in importance with the other; and the intimation that Lucrezia was to marry the heir presumptive to the duchy of Ferrara was received with a joy so great that it smacked of the humble beginnings of the Borgian house. The Duke of Valentinois was invited to return to Rome, to take his share in the family rejoicing, and on the day when the news was made public the governor of St. Angelo received orders that cannon should be fired every quarter of an hour from noon to midnight. At two o'clock, Lucrezia, attired as a

fiancée, and accompanied by her two brothers, the Dukes of Valentinois and Squillace, issued from the Vatican, followed by all the nobility of Rome, and proceeded to the church of the Madonna del Popolo, where the Duke of Gandia and Cardinal Gian Borgia were buried, to render thanks for this new favour accorded to her house by God; and in the evening, accompanied by the same cavalcade, which shone the more brightly under the torchlight and brilliant illuminations, she made procession through the whole town, greeted by cries of "Long live Pope Alexander VI! Long live the Duchess of Ferrara!" which were shouted aloud by heralds clad in cloth of gold.

The next day an announcement was made in the town that a racecourse for women was opened between the castle of Sant' Angelo and the Piazza of St. Peter's; that on every third day there would be a bull-fight in the Spanish fashion; and that from the end of the present month, which was October, until the first day of Lent, masquerades would be permitted in the streets of Rome.

Such was the nature of the fêtes outside; the programme of those going on within the Vatican was not presented to the people; for by the account of Bucciardo, an eye-witness, this is what happened:—

"On the last Sunday of the month of October, fifty courtesans supped in the apostolic palace in the Duke of Valentinois' rooms, and after supper danced with

the equerries and servants, first wearing their usual garments, afterwards in dazzling draperies; when supper was over, the table was removed, candlesticks were set on the floor in a symmetrical pattern, and a great quantity of chestnuts was scattered on the ground: these the fifty women skilfully picked up, running about gracefully, in and out between the burning lights; the pope, the Duke of Valentinois, and his sister Lucrezia, who were looking on at this spectacle from a gallery, encouraged the most agile and industrious with their applause, and they received prizes of embroidered garters, velvet boots, golden caps, and laces; then new diversions took the place of these."

. . . . . .

We humbly ask forgiveness of our readers, and especially of our lady readers; but though we have found words to describe the first part of the spectacle, we have sought them in vain for the second; suffice it to say that just as there had been prizes for feats of adroitness, others were given now to the dancers who were most daring and brazen.

Some days after this strange night, which calls to mind the Roman evenings in the days of Tiberius, Nero, and Heliogabalus, Lucrezia, clad in a robe of golden brocade, her train carried by young girls dressed in white and crowned with roses, issued from her palace to the sound of trumpets and

clarions, and made her way over carpets that were laid down in the streets through which she had to pass. Accompanied by the noblest cavaliers and the loveliest women in Rome, she betook herself to the Vatican, where in the Pauline hall the pope awaited her, with the Duke of Valentinois, Don Ferdinand, acting as proxy for Duke Alfonso, and his cousin, Cardinal d'Este. The pope sat on one side of the table, while the envoys from Ferrara stood on the other: into their midst came Lucrezia, and Don Ferdinand placed on her finger the nuptial ring; this ceremony over, Cardinal d'Este approached and presented to the bride four magnificent rings set with precious stones; then a casket was placed on the table, richly inlaid with ivory, whence the cardinal drew forth a great many trinkets, chains, necklaces of pearls and diamonds, of workmanship as costly as their material; these he also begged Lucrezia to accept, before she received those the bridegroom was hoping to offer himself, which would be more worthy of her. Lucrezia showed the utmost delight in accepting these gifts; then she retired into the next room, leaning on the pope's arm, and followed by the ladies of her suite, leaving the Duke of Valentinois to do the honours of the Vatican to the men. That evening the guests met again, and spent half the night in dancing, while a magnificent display of fireworks lighted up the Piazza of San Paolo.

The ceremony of betrothal over, the pope and the Duke busied themselves with making preparations for the departure. The pope, who wished the journey to be made with a great degree of splendour, sent in his daughter's company, in addition to the two brothers-in-law and the gentlemen in their suite, the Senate of Rome and all the lords who, by virtue of their wealth, could display most magnificence in their costumes and liveries. Among this brilliant throng might be seen Olivero and Ramiro Mattei, sons of Piero Mattei, chancellor of the town, and a daughter of the pope whose mother was not Rosa Vanozza; besides these, the pope nominated in consistory Francesco Borgia, Cardinal of Sosenza, legate *a latere,* to accompany his daughter to the frontiers of the Ecclesiastical States.

Also the Duke of Valentinois sent out messengers into all the cities of Romagna to order that Lucrezia should be received as sovereign lady and mistress: grand preparations were at once set on foot for the fulfilment of his orders. But the messengers reported that they greatly feared that there would be some grumbling at Cesena, where it will be remembered that Cæsar had left Ramiro d'Orco as governor with plenary powers, to calm the agitation of the town. Now Ramiro d'Orco had accomplished his task so well that there was nothing more to fear in the way of rebellion; for one-sixth of the inhabitants

had perished on the scaffold, and the result of this situation was that it was improbable that the same demonstrations of joy could be expected from a town plunged in mourning that were looked for from Imola, Faenza, and Pesaro. The Duke of Valentinois averted this inconvenience in the prompt and efficacious fashion characteristic of him alone. One morning the inhabitants of Cesena awoke to find a scaffold set up in the square, and upon it the four quarters of a man, his head, severed from the trunk, stuck up on the end of a pike.

This man was Ramiro d'Orco.

No one ever knew by whose hands the scaffold had been raised by night, nor by what executioners the terrible deed had been carried out; but when the Florentine Republic sent to ask Macchiavelli, their ambassador at Cesena, what he thought of it, he replied:—

"MAGNIFICENT LORDS,—I can tell you nothing concerning the execution of Ramiro d'Orco, except that Cæsar Borgia is the prince who best knows how to make and unmake men according to their deserts.

NICCOLO MACCHIAVELLI."

The Duke of Valentinois was not disappointed, and the future Duchess of Ferrara was admirably received in every town along her route, and particularly at Cesena.

While Lucrezia was on her way to Ferrara to meet her fourth husband, Alexander and the Duke of Valentinois resolved to make a progress in the region of their last conquest, the duchy of Piombino. The apparent object of this journey was that the new subjects might take their oath to Cæsar, and the real object was to form an arsenal in Jacopo d'Appiano's capital within reach of Tuscany, a plan which neither the pope nor his son had ever seriously abandoned. The two accordingly started from the port of Corneto with six ships, accompanied by a great number of cardinals and prelates, and arrived the same evening at Piombino. The pontifical court made a stay there of several days, partly with a view of making the duke known to the inhabitants, and also in order to be present at certain ecclesiastical functions, of which the most important was a service held on the third Sunday in Lent, in which the Cardinal of Cosenza sang a mass and the pope officiated in state with the duke and the cardinals. After these solemn functions the customary pleasures followed, and the pope summoned the prettiest girls of the country and ordered them to dance their national dances before him.

Following on these dances came feasts of unheard-of magnificence, during which the pope in the sight of all men completely ignored Lent and did not fast. The object of all these fêtes was to scatter abroad a

great deal of money, and so to make the Duke of Valentinois popular, while poor Jacopo d'Appiano was forgotten.

When they left Piombino, the pope and his son visited the island of Elba, where they only stayed long enough to visit the old fortifications and issue orders for the building of new ones.

Then the illustrious travellers embarked on their return journey to Rome; but scarcely had they put out to sea when the weather became adverse, and the pope not wishing to put in at Porto Ferrajo, they remained five days on board, though they had only two days' provisions. During the last three days the pope lived on fried fish that were caught under great difficulties because of the heavy weather. At last they arrived in sight of Corneto, and there the duke, who was not on the same vessel as the pope, seeing that his ship could not get in, had a boat put out, and so was taken ashore. The pope was obliged to continue on his way towards Pontercole, where at last he arrived, after encountering so violent a tempest that all who were with him were utterly subdued either by sickness or by the terror of death. The pope alone did not show one instant's fear, but remained on the bridge during the storm, sitting on his arm-chair, invoking the name of Jesus and making the sign of the cross. At last his ship entered the roads of Pontercole, where he landed,

and after sending to Corneto to fetch horses, he rejoined the duke, who was there awaiting him. They then returned by slow stages, by way of Cività Vecchia and Palo, and reached Rome after an absence of a month. Almost at the same time d'Albret arrived in quest of his cardinal's hat. He was accompanied by two princes of the house of Navarre, who were received with not only those honours which beseemed their rank, but also as brothers-in-law to whom the duke was eager to show in what spirit he was contracting this alliance

CHAPTER XIII

THE time had now come for the Duke of Valentinois to continue the pursuit of his conquests. So, since on the 1st of May in the preceding year the pope had pronounced sentence of forfeiture in full consistory against Julius Cæsar of Varano, as punishment for the murder of his brother Rudolph and for the harbouring of the pope's enemies, and he had accordingly been mulcted of his fief of Camerino, which was to be handed over to the apostolic chamber, Cæsar left Rome to put the sentence in execution. Consequently, when he arrived on the frontiers of Perugia, which belonged to his lieutenant, Gian Paolo Baglioni, he sent Oliverotto da Fermo and Orsini of Gravina to lay waste the March of Camerino, at the same time petitioning Guido d'Ubaldo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, to lend his soldiers and artillery to help him in this enterprise. This the unlucky Duke of Urbino, who enjoyed the best possible relations with the pope, and who had no reason for distrusting Cæsar, did not dare refuse. But on the very same day that the Duke of Urbino's troops started for Camerino,

Cæsar's troops entered the duchy of Urbino, and took possession of Cagli, one of the four towns of the little State. The Duke of Urbino knew what awaited him if he tried to resist, and fled incontinently, disguised as a peasant; thus in less than eight days Cæsar was master of his whole duchy, except the fortresses of Maiolo and San Leone.

The Duke of Valentinois forthwith returned to Camerino, where the inhabitants still held out, encouraged by the presence of Julius Cæsar di Varano, their lord, and his two sons, Venantio and Hannibal; the eldest son, Gian Maria, had been sent by his father to Venice.

The presence of Cæsar was the occasion of parleying between the besiegers and besieged. A capitulation was arranged whereby Varano engaged to give up the town, on condition that he and his sons were allowed to retire safe and sound, taking with them their furniture, treasure, and carriages. But this was by no means Cæsar's intention; so, profiting by the relaxation in vigilance that had naturally come about in the garrison when the news of the capitulation had been announced, he surprised the town in the night preceding the surrender, and seized Cæsar di Varano and his two sons, who were strangled a short time after, the father at La Pergola and the sons at Pesaro, by Don Michele Correglio, who, though he had left the position of sbirro for that of

a captain, every now and then returned to his first business.

Meanwhile Vitellozzo Vitelli, who had assumed the title of General of the Church, and had under him 800 men-at-arms and 3,000 infantry, was following the secret instructions that he had received from Cæsar by word of mouth, and was carrying forward that system of invasion which was to encircle Florence in a network of iron, and in the end make her defence an impossibility. A worthy pupil of his master, in whose school he had learned to use in turn the cunning of a fox and the strength of a lion, he had established an understanding between himself and certain young gentlemen of Arezzo to get that town delivered into his hands. But the plot had been discovered by Guglielmo dei Pazzi, commissary of the Florentine Republic, and he had arrested two of the conspirators, whereupon the others, who were much more numerous than was supposed, had instantly dispersed about the town, summoning the citizens to arms. All the republican faction, who saw in any sort of revolution the means of subjugating Florence, joined their party, set the captives at liberty, and seized Guglielmo; then proclaiming the establishment of the ancient constitution, they besieged the citadel, whither Cosimo dei Pazzi, Bishop of Arezzo, the son of Guglielmo, had fled for refuge; he, finding himself invested on every

side, sent a messenger in hot haste to Florence to ask for help.

Unfortunately for the cardinal, Vitellozzo's troops were nearer to the besiegers than were the soldiers of the most serene republic to the besieged, and instead of help—the whole army of the enemy came down upon him. This army was under the command of Vitellozzo, of Gian Paolo Baglioni, and of Fabio Orsino, and with them were the two Medici, ever ready to go wherever there was a league against Florence, and ever ready at the command of Borgia, on any conditions whatever, to re-enter the town whence they had been banished. The next day more help in the form of money and artillery arrived, sent by Pandolfo Petrucci, and on the 18th of June the citadel of Arezzo, which had received no news from Florence, was obliged to surrender.

Vitellozzo left the men of Arezzo to look after their town themselves, leaving also Fabio Orsino to garrison the citadel with a thousand men. Then, profiting by the terror that had been spread throughout all this part of Italy by the successive captures of the duchy of Urbino, of Camerino, and of Arezzo, he marched upon Monte San Severino, Castiglione, Aretino, Cortone, and the other towns of the valley of Chiana, which submitted one after the other almost without a struggle. When he was only ten or twelve leagues from Florence, and dared not on his

The Pope summoned the prettiest girls of the country and ordered them to dance their national dances before him.

—p. 282

From the painting by H. Kaulbach

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own account attempt anything against her, he made known the state of affairs to the Duke of Valentinois. He, fancying the hour had come at last for striking the blow so long delayed, started off at once to deliver his answer in person to his faithful lieutenants.

But the Florentines, though they had sent no help to Guglielmo dei Pazzi, had demanded aid from Chaumont d'Amboise, governor of the Milanese, on behalf of Louis XII, not only explaining the danger they themselves were in but also Cæsar's ambitious projects, namely that after first overcoming the small principalities and then the states of the second order, he had now, it seemed, reached such a height of pride that he would attack the King of France himself. The news from Naples was disquieting; serious differences had already occurred between the Count of Armagnac and Gonzalvo di Cordova, and Louis might any day need Florence, whom he had always found loyal and faithful. He therefore resolved to check Cæsar's progress, and not only sent him orders to advance no further step forwards, but also sent off, to give effect to his injunction, the captain Imbaut with 400 lances. The Duke of Valentinois on the frontier of Tuscany received a copy of the treaty signed between the republic and the King of France, a treaty in which the king engaged to help his ally against any enemy whatsoever, and at the same

moment the formal prohibition from Louis to advance any further. Cæsar also learned that beside the 400 lances with the captain Imbaut, which were on the road to Florence, Louis XII had as soon as he reached Asti sent off to Parma Louis de la Trimouille and 200 men-at-arms, 3000 Swiss, and a considerable train of artillery. In these two movements combined he saw hostile intentions towards himself, and turning right about face with his usual agility, he profited by the fact that he had given nothing but verbal instructions to all his lieutenants, and wrote a furious letter to Vitellozzo, reproaching him for compromising his master with a view to his own private interest, and ordering the instant surrender to the Florentines of the towns and fortresses he had taken, threatening to march down with his own troops and take them if he hesitated for a moment.

As soon as this letter was written, Cæsar departed for Milan, where Louis XII had just arrived, bringing with him proof positive that he had been calumniated in the evacuation of the conquered towns. He also was entrusted with the pope's mission to renew for another eighteen months the title of legate *a latere* in France to Cardinal d'Amboise, the friend rather than the minister of Louis XII. Thus, thanks to the public proof of his innocence and the private use of his influence, Cæsar soon made his peace with the King of France.

But this was not all. It was in the nature of Cæsar's genius to divert an impending calamity that threatened his destruction so as to come out of it better than before, and he suddenly saw the advantage he might take from the pretended disobedience of his lieutenants. Already he had been disturbed now and again by their growing power, and coveted their towns, now he thought the hour had perhaps come for suppressing them also, and in the usurpation of their private possessions striking a blow at Florence, who always escaped him at the very moment when he thought to take her. It was indeed an annoying thing to have these fortresses and towns displaying another banner than his own in the midst of the beautiful Romagna which he desired for his own kingdom. For Vitellozzo possessed Città di Castello, Bentivoglio Bologna, Gian Paolo Baglioni was in command of Perugia, Oliverotto had just taken Fermo, and Pandolfo Petrucci was lord of Siena; it was high time that all these returned into his own hands. The lieutenants of the Duke of Valentinois, like Alexander's, were becoming too powerful, and Borgia must inherit from them, unless he were willing to let them become his own heirs. He obtained from Louis XII three hundred lances wherewith to march against them. As soon as Vitellozzo Vitelli received Cæsar's letter he perceived that he was being sacrificed to the fear that the King of

France inspired; but he was not one of those victims who suffer their throats to be cut in the expiation of a mistake: he was a buffalo of Romagna who opposed his horns to the knife of the butcher; besides, he had the example of Varano and the Manfredi before him, and, death for death, he preferred to perish in arms.

So Vitellozzo convoked at Maggione all whose lives or lands were threatened by this new reversal of Cæsar's policy. These were Paolo Orsino, Gian Paolo Baglioni, Hermes Bentivoglio, representing his father Gian, Antonio di Venafro, the envoy of Pandolfo Petrucci, Oliverotto da Fermo, and the Duke of Urbino: the first six had everything to lose, and the last had already lost everything.

A treaty of alliance was signed between the confederates: they engaged to resist whether he attacked them severally or all together.

Cæsar learned the existence of this league by its first effects: the Duke of Urbino, who was adored by his subjects, had come with a handful of soldiers to the fortress of San Leone, and it had yielded at once. In less than a week towns and fortresses followed this example, and all the duchy was once more in the hands of the Duke of Urbino.

At the same time, each member of the confederacy openly proclaimed his revolt against the common enemy, and took up a hostile attitude.

Cæsar was at Imola, awaiting the French troops, but with scarcely any men; so that Bentivoglio, who held part of the country, and the Duke of Urbino, who had just reconquered the rest of it, could probably have either taken him or forced him to fly and quit the Romagna, had they marched against him; all the more since the two men on whom he counted, viz., Don Ugo di Cardona, who had entered his service after Capua was taken, and Michelotto had mistaken his intention, and were all at once separated from him. He had really ordered them to fall back upon Rimini, and bring 200 light horse and 500 infantry of which they had the command; but, unaware of the urgency of his situation, at the very moment when they were attempting to surprise La Pergola and Fossombrone, they were surrounded by Orsino of Gravina and Vitellozzo. Ugo di Cardona and Michelotto defended themselves like lions; but in spite of their utmost efforts their little band was cut to pieces, and Ugo di Cardona taken prisoner, while Michelotto only escaped the same fate by lying down among the dead; when night came on, he escaped to Fano.

But even alone as he was, almost without troops at Imola, the confederates dared attempt nothing against Cæsar, whether because of the personal fear he inspired, or because in him they respected the ally of the King of France; they contented them-

selves with taking the towns and fortresses in the neighbourhood. Vitellozzo had retaken the fortresses of Fossombrone, Urbino, Cagli, and Aggobbio; Orsino of Gravina had reconquered Fano and the whole province; while Gian Maria de Varano, the same who by his absence had escaped being massacred with the rest of his family, had re-entered Camerino, borne in triumph by his people. Not even all this could destroy Cæsar's confidence in his own good fortune, and while he was on the one hand urging on the arrival of the French troops and calling into his pay all those gentlemen known as "broken lances," because they went about the country in parties of five or six only, and attached themselves to anyone who wanted them, he had opened up negotiations with his enemies, certain that from that very day when he should persuade them to a conference they were undone. Indeed, Cæsar had the power of persuasion as a gift from heaven; and though they perfectly well knew his duplicity, they had no power of resisting, not so much his actual eloquence as that air of frank good-nature which Macchiavelli so greatly admired, and which indeed more than once deceived even him, wily politician as he was. In order to get Paolo Orsino to treat with him at Imola, Cæsar sent Cardinal Borgia to the confederates as a hostage; and on this Paolo Orsino hesitated

no longer, and on the 25th of October, 1502, arrived at Imola.

Cæsar received him as an old friend from whom one might have been estranged a few days because of some slight passing differences; he frankly avowed that all the fault was no doubt on his side, since he had contrived to alienate men who were such loyal lords and also such brave captains; but with men of their nature, he added, an honest, honourable explanation such as he would give must put everything once more *in statu quo*. To prove that it was goodwill, not fear, that brought him back to them, he showed Orsino the letters from Cardinal Amboise which announced the speedy arrival of French troops; he showed him those he had collected about him, in the wish, he declared, that they might be thoroughly convinced that what he chiefly regretted in the whole matter was not so much the loss of the distinguished captains who were the very soul of his vast enterprise, as that he had led the world to believe, in a way so fatal to his own interest, that he could for a single instant fail to recognise their merit; adding that he consequently relied upon him, Paolo Orsino, whom he had always cared for most, to bring back the confederates by a peace which would be as much for the profit of all as a war was hurtful to all, and that he was ready to sign a treaty in consonance with their

wishes so long as it should not prejudice his own honour.

Orsino was the man Cæsar wanted: full of pride and confidence in himself, he was convinced of the truth of the old proverb that says, "A pope cannot reign eight days, if he has both the Colonnas and the Orsini against him." He believed, therefore, if not in Cæsar's good faith, at any rate in the necessity he must feel for making peace; accordingly he signed with him the following conventions—which only needed ratification—on the 18th of October, 1502, which we reproduce here as Macchiavelli sent them to the magnificent republic of Florence.

"Agreement between the Duke of Valentinois and the Confederates.

"Let it be known to the parties mentioned below, and to all who shall see these presents, that His Excellency the Duke of Romagna of the one part and the Orsini of the other part, together with their confederates, desiring to put an end to differences, enmities, misunderstandings, and suspicions which have arisen between them, have resolved as follows:

"There shall be between them peace and alliance true and perpetual, with a complete obliteration of wrongs and injuries which may have taken place up to this day, both parties engaging to preserve no resentment of the same; and in conformity with

the aforesaid peace and union, His Excellency the Duke of Romagna shall receive into perpetual confederation, league, and alliance all the lords aforesaid; and each of them shall promise to defend the estates of all in general and of each in particular against any power that may annoy or attack them for any cause whatsoever, excepting always nevertheless the Pope Alexander VI and his Very Christian Majesty Louis XII, King of France: the lords above named promising on the other part to unite in the defence of the person and estates of His Excellency, as also those of the most illustrious lords, Don Goffredo Borgia, Prince of Squillace, Don Roderigo Borgia, Duke of Sermoneta and Biselli, and Don Gian Borgia, Duke of Camerino and Nepi, all brothers or nephews of the Duke of Romagna.

"Moreover, since the rebellion and usurpation of Urbino have occurred during the above-mentioned misunderstandings, all the confederates aforesaid and each of them shall bind themselves to unite all their forces for the recovery of the estates aforesaid and of such other places as have revolted and been usurped.

"His Excellency the Duke of Romagna shall undertake to continue to the Orsini and Vitelli their ancient engagements in the way of military service and on the same conditions.

"His Excellency promises further not to insist on the service in person of more than one of them, as they may choose: the service that the others may render shall be voluntary.

"He also promises that the second treaty shall be ratified by the sovereign pontiff, who shall not compel Cardinal Orsino to reside in Rome longer than shall seem convenient to this prelate.

"Furthermore, since there are certain differences between the Pope and the lord Gian Bentivoglio, the confederates aforesaid agree that they shall be put to the arbitration of Cardinal Orsino, of His Excellency the Duke of Romagna, and of the lord Pandolfo Petrucci, without appeal.

"Thus the confederates engage, each and all, so soon as they may be required by the Duke of Romagna, to put into his hands as a hostage one of the legitimate sons of each of them, in that place and at that time which he may be pleased to indicate.

"The same confederates promising moreover, all and each, that if any project directed against any one of them come to their knowledge, to give warning thereof, and all to prevent such project reciprocally.

"It is agreed, over and above, between the Duke of Romagna and the confederates aforesaid, to regard as a common enemy any who shall fail to

keep the present stipulations, and to unite in the destruction of any States not conforming thereto.

"(*Signed*) CÆSAR, PAOLO ORSINO.
"AGAPIT, *Secretary.*"

At the same time, while Orsino was carrying to the confederates the treaty drawn up between him and the duke, Bentivoglio, not willing to submit to the arbitration indicated, made an offer to Cæsar of settling their differences by a private treaty, and sent his son to arrange the conditions: after some parleying, they were settled as follows:—

Bentivoglio should separate his fortunes from the Vitelli and Orsini;

He should furnish the Duke of Valentinois with a hundred men-at-arms and a hundred mounted archers for eight years;

He should pay 12,000 ducats per annum to Cæsar, for the support of a hundred lances;

In return for this, his son Hannibal was to marry the sister of the Archbishop of Enna, who was Cæsar's niece, and the pope was to recognise his sovereignty in Bologna;

The King of France, the Duke of Ferrara, and the republic of Florence were to be the guarantors of this treaty.

But the convention brought to the confederates by Orsino was the cause of great difficulties on their

part. Vitellozzo Vitelli in particular, who knew Cæsar the best, never ceased to tell the other condottieri that so prompt and easy a peace must needs be the cover to some trap; but since Cæsar had meanwhile collected a considerable army at Imola, and the four hundred lances lent him by Louis XII had arrived at last, Vitellozzo and Oliverotto decided to sign the treaty that Orsino brought, and to let the Duke of Urbino and the lord of Camerino know of it; they, seeing plainly that it was henceforth impossible to make a defence unaided, had retired, the one to Città di Castello and the other into the kingdom of Naples.

But Cæsar, saying nothing of his intentions, started on the 10th of December, and made his way to Cesena with a powerful army once more under his command. Fear began to spread on all sides, not only in Romagna but in the whole of Northern Italy; Florence, seeing him move away from her, only thought it a blind to conceal his intentions; while Venice, seeing him approach her frontiers, despatched all her troops to the banks of the Po. Cæsar perceived their fear, and lest harm should be done to himself by the mistrust it might inspire, he sent away all French troops in his service as soon as he reached Cesena, except a hundred men with M. de Candale, his brother-in-law; it was then seen that he only had 2000 cavalry and 2000 infantry

with him. Several days were spent in parleying, for at Cesena Cæsar found the envoys of the Vitelli and Orsini, who themselves were with their army in the duchy of Urbino; but after the preliminary discussions as to the right course to follow in carrying on the plan of conquest, there arose such difficulties between the general-in-chief and these agents, that they could not but see the impossibility of getting anything settled by intermediaries, and the urgent necessity of a conference between Cæsar and one of the chiefs. So Oliverotto ran the risk of joining the duke in order to make proposals to him, either to march on Tuscany or to take Sinigaglia, which was the only place in the duchy of Urbino that had not again fallen into Cæsar's power. Cæsar's reply was that he did not desire to war upon Tuscany, because the Tuscans were his friends; but that he approved of the lieutenants' plan with regard to Sinigaglia, and therefore was marching towards Fano.

But the daughter of Frederic, the former Duke of Urbino, who held the town of Sinigaglia, and who was called the lady-prefect, because she had married Gian della Rovere, whom his uncle, Sixtus IV, had made prefect of Rome, judging that it would be impossible to defend herself against the forces the Duke of Valentinois was bringing, left the citadel in the hands of a captain, recommending him to

get the best terms he could for the town, and took boat for Venice.

Cæsar learned this news at Rimini, through a messenger from Vitelli and the Orsini, who said that the governor of the citadel, though refusing to yield to them, was quite ready to make terms with him, and consequently they would engage to go to the town and finish the business there. Cæsar's reply was that in consequence of this information he was sending some of his troops to Cesena and Imola, for they would be useless to him, as he should now have theirs, which together with the escort he retained would be sufficient, since his only object was the complete pacification of the duchy of Urbino. He added that this pacification would not be possible if his old friends continued to distrust him, and to discuss through intermediaries alone plans in which their own fortunes were interested as well as his. The messenger returned with this answer, and the confederates, though feeling, it is true, the justice of Cæsar's remarks, none the less hesitated to comply with his demand. Vitellozzo Vitelli in particular showed a want of confidence in him which nothing seemed able to subdue; but, pressed by Oliverotto, Gravina, and Orsino, he consented at last to await the duke's coming; making concession rather because he could not bear to appear more timid than his companions, than because of any confidence he

felt in the return of friendship that Borgia was displaying.

The duke learned the news of this decision, so much desired, when he arrived at Fano on the 20th of December 1502. At once he summoned eight of his most faithful friends, among whom were d'Enna, his nephew, Michelotto, and Ugo di Cardona, and ordered them, as soon as they arrived at Sinigaglia, and had seen Vitellozzo, Gravina, Oliverotto, and Orsino come out to meet them, on a pretext of doing them honour, to place themselves on the right and left hand of the four generals, two beside each, so that at a given signal they might either stab or arrest them; next he assigned to each of them his particular man, bidding them not quit his side until he had re-entered Sinigaglia and arrived at the quarters prepared for him; then he sent orders to such of the soldiers as were in cantonments in the neighbourhood to assemble to the number of 8000 on the banks of the Metaurus, a little river of Umbria which runs into the Adriatic and has been made famous by the defeat of Hasdrubal.

The duke arrived at the rendezvous given to his army on the 31st of December, and instantly sent out in front two hundred horse, and immediately behind them his infantry; following close in the midst of his men-at-arms, following the coast of the Adriatic, with the mountains on his right and the

sea on his left, which in part of the way left only space for the army to march ten abreast.

After four hours' march, the duke at a turn of the path perceived Sinigaglia, nearly a mile distant from the sea, and a bowshot from the mountains; between the army and the town ran a little river, whose banks he had to follow for some distance. At last he found a bridge opposite a suburb of the town, and here Cæsar ordered his cavalry to stop: it was drawn up in two lines, one between the road and the river, the other on the side of the country, leaving the whole width of the road to the infantry: which latter defiled, crossed the bridge, and entering the town, drew themselves up in battle array in the great square.

On their side, Vitellozzo, Gravina, Orsino, and Oliverotto, to make room for the duke's army, had quartered their soldiers in little towns or villages in the neighbourhood of Sinigaglia; Oliverotto alone had kept nearly 1000 infantry and 150 horse, who were in barracks in the suburb through which the duke entered.

Cæsar had made only a few steps towards the town when he perceived Vitellozzo at the gate, with the Duke of Gravina and Orsino, who all came out to meet him; the last two quite gay and confident, but the first so gloomy and dejected that you would have thought he foresaw the fate that was in store

for him; and doubtless he had not been without some presentiments; for when he left his army to come to Sinigaglia, he had bidden them farewell as though never to meet again, had commended the care of his family to the captains, and embraced his children with tears—a weakness which appeared strange to all who knew him as a brave condottiere.

The duke marched up to them holding out his hand, as a sign that all was over and forgotten, and did it with an air at once so loyal and so smiling that Gravina and Orsino could no longer doubt the genuine return of his friendship, and it was only Vitellozzo still appeared sad. At the same moment, exactly as they had been commanded, the duke's accomplices took their posts on the right and left of those they were to watch, who were all there except Oliverotto, whom the duke could not see, and began to seek with uneasy looks; but as he crossed the suburb he perceived him exercising his troops on the square. Cæsar at once despatched Michelotto and d'Enna, with a message that it was a rash thing to have his troops out, when they might easily start some quarrel with the duke's men and bring about an affray: it would be much better to settle them in barracks and then come to join his companions, who were with Cæsar. Oliverotto, drawn by the same fate as his friends, made no objection, ordered his

soldiers indoors, and put his horse to the gallop to join the duke, escorted on either side by d'Enna and Michelotto. Cæsar, on seeing him, called him, took him by the hand, and continued his march to the palace that had been prepared for him, his four victims following after.

Arrived on the threshold, Cæsar dismounted, and signing to the leader of the men-at-arms to await his orders, he went in first, followed by Oliverotto, Gravina, Vitellozzo Vitelli, and Orsino, each accompanied by his two satellites; but scarcely had they gone upstairs and into the first room when the door was shut behind them, and Cæsar turned round, saying, "The hour has come!" This was the signal agreed upon. Instantly the former confederates were seized, thrown down, and forced to surrender with a dagger at their throat. Then, while they were being carried to a dungeon, Cæsar opened the window, went out on the balcony and cried out to the leader of his men-at-arms, "Go forward!" The man was in the secret, he rushed on with his band towards the barracks where Oliverotto's soldiers had just been consigned, and they, suddenly surprised and off their guard, were at once made prisoners; then the duke's troops began to pillage the town, and he summoned Macchiavelli.

Cæsar and the Florentine envoy were nearly two hours shut up together, and since Macchiavelli him-

self recounts the history of this interview, we will give his own words.

"He summoned me," says the Florentine ambassador, "and in the calmest manner showed me his joy at the success of this enterprise, which he assured me he had spoken of to me the evening before; I remember that he did, but *I did not at that time understand what he meant;* next he explained, in terms of much feeling and lively affection for our city, the different motives which had made him desire your alliance, a desire to which he hopes you will respond. He ended with charging me to lay three proposals before your lordships: first, that you rejoice with him in the destruction at a single blow of the mortal enemies of the king, himself, and you, and the consequent disappearance of all seeds of trouble and dissension likely to waste Italy: this service of his, together with his refusal to allow the prisoners to march against you, ought, he thinks, to excite your gratitude towards him; secondly, he begs that you will at this juncture give him a striking proof of your friendliness, by urging your cavalry's advance towards Borgo, and there assembling some infantry also, in order that they may march with him, should need arise, on Castello or on Perugia. Lastly, he desires—and this is his third condition—that you arrest the Duke of Urbino, if he should flee from Castello into

your territories, when he learns that Vitellozzo is a prisoner.

"When I objected that to give him up would not beseem the dignity of the republic, and that you would never consent, he approved of my words, and said that it would be enough for you to keep the duke, and not give him his liberty without His Excellency's permission. I have promised to give you all this information, to which he awaits your reply."

The same night eight masked men descended to the dungeon where the prisoners lay: they believed at that moment that the fatal hour had arrived for all. But this time the executioners had to do with Vitellozzo and Oliverotto alone. When these two captains heard that they were condemned, Oliverotto burst forth into reproaches against Vitellozzo, saying that it was all his fault that they had taken up arms against the duke: not a word Vitellozzo answered except a prayer that the pope might grant him plenary indulgence for all his sins. Then the masked men took them away, leaving Orsino and Gravina to await a similar fate, and led away the two chosen out to die to a secluded spot outside the ramparts of the town, where they were strangled and buried at once in two trenches that had been dug beforehand.

The two others were kept alive until it should be known if the pope had arrested Cardinal Orsino,

archbishop of Florence and lord of Santa Croce; and when the answer was received in the affirmative from His Holiness, Gravina and Orsino, who had been transferred to a castle, were likewise strangled.

The duke, leaving instructions with Michelotto, set off for Sinigaglia as soon as the first execution was over, assuring Macchiavelli that he had never had any other thought than that of giving tranquillity to the Romagna and to Tuscany, and also that he thought he had succeeded by taking and putting to death the men who had been the cause of all the trouble; also that any other revolt that might take place in the future would be nothing but sparks that a drop of water could extinguish.

The pope had barely learned that Cæsar had his enemies in his power, when, eager to play the same winning game himself, he announced to Cardinal Orsino, though it was then midnight, that his son had taken Sinigaglia, and gave him an invitation to come the next morning and talk over the good news. The cardinal, delighted at this increase of favour, did not miss his appointment. So, in the morning, he started on horseback for the Vatican; but at a turn of the first street he met the governor of Rome with a detachment of cavalry, who congratulated himself on the happy chance that they were taking the same road, and accompanied him to the threshold

of the Vatican. There the cardinal dismounted, and began to ascend the stairs; scarcely, however, had he reached the first landing before his mules and carriages were seized and shut in the palace stables. When he entered the hall of the Perropont, he found that he and all his suite were surrounded by armed men, who led him into another apartment, called the Vicar's Hall, where he found the Abbate Alviano, the protonotary Orsino, Jacopo Santa Croce, and Rinaldo Orsino, who were all prisoners like himself; at the same time the governor received orders to seize the castle of Monte Giardino, which belonged to the Orsini, and take away all the jewels, all the hangings, all the furniture, and all the silver that he might find.

The governor carried out his orders conscientiously, and brought to the Vatican everything he seized, down to the cardinal's account-book. On consulting this book, the pope found out two things: first, that a sum of 2000 ducats was due to the cardinal, no debtor's name being mentioned; secondly, that the cardinal had bought three months before, for 1500 Roman crowns, a magnificent pearl which could not be found among the objects belonging to him: on which Alexander ordered that from that very moment until the negligence in the cardinal's accounts was repaired, the men who were in the habit of bringing him food twice a day on behalf

of his mother should not be admitted into the Castle Sant' Angelo. The same day, the cardinal's mother sent the pope the 2000 ducats, and the next day his mistress, in man's attire, came in person to bring the missing pearl. His Holiness, however, was so struck with her beauty in this costume, that, we are told, he let her keep the pearl for the same price she had paid for it.

Then the pope allowed the cardinal to have his food brought as before, and he died of poison on the 22nd of February—that is, two days after his accounts had been set right.

That same night the Prince of Squillace set off to take possession, in the pope's name, of the lands of the deceased.

CHAPTER XIV

THE Duke of Valentinois had continued his road towards Città di Castello and Perugia, and had seized these two towns without striking a blow; for the Vitelli had fled from the former, and the latter had been abandoned by Gian Paolo Baglione with no attempt whatever at resistance. There still remained Siena, where Pandolfo Petrucci was shut up, the only man remaining of all who had joined the league against Cæsar.

But Siena was under the protection of the French. Besides, Siena was not one of the States of the Church, and Cæsar had no rights there. Therefore he was content with insisting upon Pandolfo Petrucci's leaving the town and retiring to Lucca, which he accordingly did.

Then all on this side being peaceful and the whole of Romagna in subjection, Cæsar resolved to return to Rome and help the pope to destroy all that was left of the Orsini.

This was all the easier because Louis XII, having suffered reverses in the kingdom of Naples, had since then been much concerned with his own affairs to disturb himself about his allies. So Cæsar, doing

for the neighbourhood of the Holy See the same thing that he had done for the Romagna, seized in succession Vicovaro, Cera, Palombera, Lanzano, and Cervetti; when these conquests were achieved, having nothing else to do now that he had brought the pontifical States into subjection from the frontiers of Naples to those of Venice, he returned to Rome to concert with his father as to the means of converting his duchy into a kingdom.

Cæsar arrived at the right moment to share with Alexander the property of Cardinal Gian Michele, who had just died, having received a poisoned cup from the hands of the pope.

The future King of Italy found his father preoccupied with a grand project: he had resolved, for the Feast of St. Peter's, to create nine cardinals. What he had to gain from these nominations is as follows:—

First, the cardinals elected would leave all their offices vacant; these offices would fall into the hands of the pope, and he would sell them;

Secondly, each of them would buy his election, more or less dear according to his fortune; the price, left to be settled at the pope's fancy, would vary from 10,000 to 40,000 ducats;

Lastly, since as cardinals they would by law lose the right of making a will, the pope, in order to inherit from them, had only to poison them: this

put him in the position of a butcher who, if he needs money, has only to cut the throat of the fattest sheep in the flock.

The nomination came to pass: the new cardinals were Giovanni Castellaro Valentino, archbishop of Trani; Francesco Remolini, ambassador from the King of Aragon; Francesco Soderini, bishop of Volterra; Melchiore Copis, bishop of Brissina; Nicolas Fiesque, bishop of Fréjus; Francesco di Sprate, bishop of Leome; Adriano Castellense, clerk of the chamber, treasurer-general, and secretary of the briefs; Francesco Loris, bishop of Elva, patriarch of Constantinople, and secretary to the pope; and Giacomo Casanova, protonotary and private chamberlain to His Holiness.

The price of their simony paid and their vacated offices sold, the pope made his choice of those he was to poison: the number was fixed at three, one old and two new; the old one was Cardinal Casanova, and the new ones Melchiore Copis and Adriano Castellense, who had taken the name of Adrian of Corneto from that town where he had been born, and where, in the capacity of clerk of the chamber, treasurer-general, and secretary of briefs, he had amassed an immense fortune.

So, when all was settled between Cæsar and the pope, they invited their chosen guests to supper in a vineyard situated near the Vatican, belonging to

the Cardinal of Corneto. In the morning of this day, the 2nd of August, they sent their servants and the steward to make all preparations, and Cæsar himself gave the pope's butler two bottles of wine prepared with the white powder resembling sugar whose mortal properties he had so often proved, and gave orders that he was to serve this wine only when he was told, and only to persons specially indicated;[1] the butler accordingly put the wine on a sideboard apart, bidding the waiters on no account to touch it, as it was reserved for the pope's drinking.

Towards evening Alexander VI walked from the Vatican leaning on Cæsar's arm, and turned his steps towards the vineyard, accompanied by Cardinal Caraffa; but as the heat was great and the climb rather steep, the pope, when he reached the top, stopped to take breath; then putting his hand on his breast, he found that he had left in his bedroom a chain that he always wore round his neck,

[1] The poison of the Borgias, say contemporary writers, was of two kinds, powder and liquid. The poison in the form of powder was a sort of white flour, almost impalpable, with the taste of sugar, and called Contarella. Its composition is unknown.

The liquid poison was prepared, we are told, in so strange a fashion that we cannot pass it by in silence. We repeat here what we read, and vouch for nothing ourselves, lest science should give us the lie.

A strong dose of arsenic was administered to a boar; as soon as the poison began to take effect, he was hung up by his heels; convulsions supervened, and a froth deadly and abundant ran out from his jaws; it was this froth, collected into a silver vessel and transferred into a bottle hermetically sealed, that made the liquid poison.

which suspended a gold medallion that enclosed the sacred host. He owed this habit to a prophecy that an astrologer had made, that so long as he carried about a consecrated wafer, neither steel nor poison could take hold upon him. Now, finding himself without his talisman, he ordered Monsignore Caraffa to hurry back at once to the Vatican, and told him in which part of his room he had left it, so that he might get it and bring it him without delay. Then, as the walk had made him thirsty, he turned to a valet, giving signs with his hand as he did so that his messenger should make haste, and asked for something to drink. Cæsar, who was also thirsty, ordered the man to bring two glasses. By a curious coincidence, the butler had just gone back to the Vatican to fetch some magnificent peaches that had been sent that very day to the pope, but which had been forgotten when he came here; so the valet went to the under butler, saying that His Holiness and Monsignore the Duke of Romagna were thirsty and asking for a drink. The under butler, seeing two bottles of wine set apart, and having heard that this wine was reserved for the pope, took one, and telling the valet to bring two glasses on a tray, poured out this wine, which both drank, little thinking that it was what they had themselves prepared to poison their guests.

Meanwhile Caraffa hurried to the Vatican, and,

as he knew the palace well, went up to the pope's bedroom, a light in his hand and attended by no servant. As he turned round a corridor a puff of wind blew out his lamp; still, as he knew the way, he went on, thinking there was no need of seeing to find the object he was in search of; but as he entered the room he recoiled a step, with a cry of terror: he beheld a ghastly apparition; it seemed that there before his eyes, in the middle of the room, between the door and the cabinet which held the medallion, Alexander VI, motionless and livid, was lying on a bier at whose four corners there burned four torches. The cardinal stood still for a moment, his eyes fixed, and his hair standing on end, without strength to move either backward or forward; then thinking it was all a trick of fancy or an apparition of the devil's making, he made the sign of the cross, invoking God's holy name; all instantly vanished, torches, bier, and corpse, and the seeming mortuary chamber was once more in darkness.

Then Cardinal Caraffa, who has himself recorded this strange event, and who was afterwards Pope Paul IV, entered boldly, and though an icy sweat ran down his brow, he went straight to the cabinet, and in the drawer indicated found the gold chain and the medallion, took them, and hastily went out to give them to the pope. He found supper served, the guests arrived, and His Holiness ready to take his

place at table; as soon as the cardinal was in sight, His Holiness, who was very pale, made one step towards him; Caraffa doubled his pace, and handed the medallion to him; but as the pope stretched forth his arm to take it, he fell back with a cry, instantly followed by violent convulsions: an instant later, as he advanced to render his father assistance, Cæsar was similarly seized; the effect of the poison had been more rapid than usual, for Cæsar had doubled the dose, and there is little doubt that their heated condition increased its activity.

The two stricken men were carried side by side to the Vatican, where each was taken to his own rooms: from that moment they never met again.

As soon as he reached his bed, the pope was seized with a violent fever, which did not give way to emetics or to bleeding; almost immediately it became necessary to administer the last sacraments of the Church; but his admirable bodily constitution, which seemed to have defied old age, was strong enough to fight eight days with death; at last, after a week of mortal agony, he died, without once uttering the name of Cæsar or Lucrezia, who were the two poles around which had turned all his affections and all his crimes. His age was seventy-two, and he had reigned eleven years.

Cæsar, perhaps because he had taken less of the fatal beverage, perhaps because the strength of his

youth overcame the strength of the poison, or maybe, as some say, because when he reached his own rooms he had swallowed an antidote known only to himself, was not so prostrated as to lose sight for a moment of the terrible position he was in: he summoned his faithful Michelotto, with those he could best count on among his men, and disposed this band in the various rooms that led to his own, ordering the chief never to leave the foot of his bed, but to sleep lying on a rug, his hand upon the handle of his sword.

The treatment had been the same for Cæsar as for the pope, but in addition to bleeding and emetics strange baths were added, which Cæsar had himself asked for, having heard that in a similar case they had once cured Ladislaus, King of Naples. Four posts, strongly welded to the floor and ceiling, were set up in his room, like the machines at which farriers shoe horses; every day a bull was brought in, turned over on his back and tied by his four legs to the four posts; then, when he was thus fixed, a cut was made in his belly a foot and a half long, through which the intestines were drawn out; then Cæsar slipped into this living bath of blood: when the bull was dead, Cæsar was taken out and rolled up in burning hot blankets, where, after copious perspirations, he almost always felt some sort of relief.

Every two hours Cæsar sent to ask news of his father: he hardly waited to hear that he was dead before, though still at death's door himself, he summoned up all the force of character and presence of mind that naturally belonged to him. He ordered Michelotto to shut the doors of the Vatican before the report of Alexander's decease could spread about the town, and forbade anyone whatsoever to enter the pope's apartments until the money and papers had been removed. Michelotto obeyed at once, went to find Cardinal Casanova, held a dagger at his throat, and made him deliver up the keys of the pope's rooms and cabinets; then, under his guidance, took away two chests full of gold, which perhaps contained 100,000 Roman crowns in specie, several boxes full of jewels, much silver and many precious vases; all these were carried to Cæsar's chamber; the guards of the room were doubled; then the doors of the Vatican were once more thrown open, and the death of the pope was proclaimed.

Although the news was expected, it produced none the less a terrible effect in Rome; for although Cæsar was still alive, his condition left everyone in suspense: had the mighty Duke of Romagna, the powerful condottiere who had taken thirty towns and fifteen fortresses in five years, been seated, sword in hand, upon his charger, nothing would have been uncertain of fluctuating even for a moment; for, as

Cæsar afterwards told Macchiavelli, his ambitious soul had provided for all things that could occur on the day of the pope's death, except the one that he should be dying himself; but being nailed down to his bed, sweating off the effects the poison had wrought; so, though he had kept his power of thinking he could no longer act, but must needs wait and suffer the course of events, instead of marching on in front and controlling them.

Thus he was forced to regulate his actions no longer by his own plans but according to circumstances. His most bitter enemies, who could press him hardest, were the Orsini and the Colonnas: from the one family he had taken their blood, from the other their goods.

So he addressed himself to those to whom he could return what he had taken, and opened negotiations with the Colonnas.

Meanwhile the obsequies of the pope were going forward: the vice-chancellor had sent out orders to the highest among the clergy, the superiors of convents, and the secular orders, not to fail to appear, according to regular custom, on pain of being despoiled of their office and dignities, each bringing his own company to the Vatican, to be present at the pope's funeral; each therefore appeared on the day and at the hour appointed at the pontifical palace, whence the body was to be conveyed to the church of

St. Peter's, and there buried. The corpse was found to be abandoned and alone in the mortuary chamber; for everyone of the name of Borgia, except Cæsar, lay hidden, not knowing what might come to pass. This was indeed well justified; for Fabio Orsino, meeting one member of the family, stabbed him, and as a sign of the hatred they had sworn to one another, bathed his mouth and hands in the blood.

The agitation in Rome was so great, that when the corpse of Alexander VI was about to enter the church there occurred a kind of panic, such as will suddenly arise in times of popular agitation, instantly causing so great a disturbance in the funeral cortège that the guards drew up in battle array, the clergy fled into the sacristy, and the bearers dropped the bier.

The people, tearing off the pall which covered it, disclosed the corpse, and everyone could see with impunity and close at hand the man who, fifteen days before, had made princes, kings and emperors tremble, from one end of the world to the other.

But in accordance with that religious feeling towards death which all men instinctively feel, and which alone survives every other, even in the heart of the atheist, the bier was taken up again and carried to the foot of the great altar in St. Peter's, where, set

on trestles, it was exposed to public view; but the body had become so black, so deformed and swollen, that it was horrible to behold; from its nose a bloody matter escaped, the mouth gaped hideously, and the tongue was so monstrously enlarged that it filled the whole cavity; to this frightful appearance was added a decomposition so great that, although at the pope's funeral it is customary to kiss the hand which bore the Fisherman's ring, not one approached to offer this mark of respect and religious reverence to the representative of God on earth.

Towards seven o'clock in the evening, when the declining day adds so deep a melancholy to the silence of a church, four porters and two working carpenters carried the corpse into the chapel where it was to be interred, and, lifting it off the catafalque, where it lay in state, put it in the coffin which was to be its last abode; but it was found that the coffin was too short, and the body could not be got in till the legs were bent and thrust in with violent blows; then the carpenters put on the lid, and while one of them sat on the top to force the knees to bend, the others hammered in the nails amid those Shakespearian pleasantries that sound as the last orison in the ear of the mighty; then, says Tommaso Tommasi, he was placed on the right of the great altar of St. Peter's, beneath a very ugly tomb.

The next morning this epitaph was found inscribed upon the tomb:—

"VENDIT ALEXANDER CLAVES, ALTARIA, CHRISTUM:
EMERAT ILLE PRIUS, VENDERE JURE POTEST";

that is,

"Pope Alexander sold the Christ, the altars, and the keys:
But anyone who buys a thing may sell it if he please."

CHAPTER XV

FROM the effect produced at Rome by Alexander's death, one may imagine what happened not only in the whole of Italy but also in the rest of the world: for a moment Europe swayed, for the column which supported the vault of the political edifice had given way, and the star with eyes of flame and rays of blood, round which all things had revolved for the last eleven years, was now extinguished, and for a moment the world, on a sudden struck motionless, remained in silence and darkness.

After the first moment of stupefaction, all who had an injury to avenge arose and hurried to the chase. Sforza retook Pesaro, Bagloine Perugia, Guido and Ubaldo Urbino, and La Rovere Sinigaglia; the Vitelli entered Città di Castello, the Appiani Piombino, the Orsini Monte Giordano and their other territories; Romagna alone remained impassive and loyal, for the people, who have no concern with the quarrels of the great, provided they do not affect themselves, had never been so happy as under the government of Cæsar.

The Colonnas were pledged to maintain a neutrality, and had been consequently restored to the possession of their castles and the cities of Chiuzano, Capo d'Anno, Frascati, Rocca di Papa, and Nettuno, which they found in a better condition than when they had left them, as the pope had had them embellished and fortified.

Cæsar was still in the Vatican with his troops, who, loyal to him in his misfortune, kept watch about the palace, where he was writhing on his bed of pain and roaring like a wounded lion. The cardinals, who had in their first terror fled, each his own way, instead of attending the pope's obsequies, began to assemble once more, some at the Minerva, others around Cardinal Caraffa. Frightened by the troops that Cæsar still had, especially since the command was entrusted to Michelotto, they collected all the money they could to levy an army of 2000 soldiers with Charles Taneo at their head, with the title of Captain of the Sacred College. It was then hoped that peace was re-established, when it was heard that Prospero Colonna was coming with 3000 men from the side of Naples, and Fabio Orsino from the side of Viterbo with 200 horse and more than 1000 infantry. Indeed, they entered Rome at only one day's interval one from another, by so similar an ardour were they inspired.

Thus there were five armies in Rome: Cæsar's

army, holding the Vatican and the Borgo; the army of the Bishop of Nicastro, who had received from Alexander the guardianship of the Castle Sant' Angelo and had shut himself up there, refusing to yield; the army of the Sacred College, which was stationed round about the Minerva; the army of Prospero Colonna, which was encamped at the Capitol; and the army of Fabio Orsino, in barracks at the Ripetta.

On their side, the Spaniards had advanced to Terracino, and the French to Nepi. The cardinals saw that Rome now stood upon a mine which the least spark might cause to explode: they summoned the ambassadors of the Emperor of Germany, the Kings of France and Spain, and the republic of Venice to raise their voice in the name of their masters. The ambassadors, impressed with the urgency of the situation, began by declaring the Sacred College inviolable: they then ordered the Orsini, the Colonnas, and the Duke of Valentinois to leave Rome and go each his own way.

The Orsini were the first to submit: the next morning their example was followed by the Colonnas. No one was left but Cæsar, who said he was willing to go, but desired to make his conditions beforehand: the Vatican was undermined, he declared, and if his demands were refused he and those who came to take him should be blown up together.

It was known that his were never empty threats: they came to terms with him.[1]

Cæsar promised to remain ten miles away from Rome the whole time the Conclave lasted, and not to take any action against the town or any other of the Ecclesiastical States: Fabio Orsino and Prospero Colonna had made the same promises.

The Venetian ambassador answered for the Orsini, the Spanish ambassador for the Colonnas, the ambassador of France for Cæsar.

At the day and hour appointed Cæsar sent out his artillery, which consisted of eighteen pieces of cannon, and 400 infantry of the Sacred College, on each of whom he bestowed a ducat: behind the artillery came a hundred chariots escorted by his advance guard.

The duke was carried out of the gate of the Vatican: he lay on a bed covered with a scarlet canopy, supported by twelve halberdiers, leaning forward on his cushions so that no one might see his face with its purple lips and bloodshot eyes: beside him was his naked sword, to show that, feeble as he was, he could use it at need: his finest charger, caparisoned in black velvet embroidered with his arms, walked

[1] It was agreed that Cæsar should quit Rome with his army, artillery, and baggage; and to ensure his not being attacked or molested in the streets, the Sacred College should add to his numbers 400 infantry, who, in case of attack or insult, would fight for him.

beside the bed, led by a page, so that Cæsar could mount in case of surprise or attack: before him and behind, both right and left, marched his army, their arms in rest, but without beating of drums or blowing of trumpets: this gave a sombre, funereal air to the whole procession, which at the gate of the city met Prospero Colonna awaiting it with a considerable band of men.

Cæsar thought at first that, breaking his word as he had so often done himself, Prospero Colonna was going to attack him. He ordered a halt, and prepared to mount his horse; but Prospero Colonna, seeing the state he was in, advanced to his bedside alone: he came, against expectation, to offer him an escort, fearing an ambuscade on the part of Fabio Orsino, who had loudly sworn that he would lose his honour or avenge the death of Paolo Orsino, his father. Cæsar thanked Colonna, and replied that from the moment that Orsino stood alone he ceased to fear him. Then Colonna saluted the duke, and rejoined his men, directing them towards Albano, while Cæsar took the road to Città Castellana, which had remained loyal.

When there, Cæsar found himself not only master of his own fate but of others as well: of the twenty-two votes he owned in the Sacred College twelve had remained faithful, and as the Conclave was composed in all of thirty-seven cardinals, he

with his twelve votes could make the majority incline to whichever side he chose. Accordingly he was courted both by the Spanish and the French party, each desiring the election of a pope of their own nation. Cæsar listened, promising nothing and refusing nothing: he gave his twelve votes to Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena, one of his father's creatures who had remained his friend, and the latter was elected on the 8th of October and took the name of Pius III.

Cæsar's hopes did not deceive him. Pius III was hardly elected before he sent him a safe-conduct to Rome: the duke came back with 250 men-at-arms, 250 light horse, and 800 infantry, and lodged in his palace, the soldiers camping round about.

Meanwhile the Orsini, pursuing their projects of vengeance against Cæsar, had been levying many troops at Perugia and the neighbourhood to bring against him to Rome, and as they fancied that France, in whose service they were engaged, was humouring the duke for the sake of the twelve votes which were wanted to secure the election of Cardinal Amboise at the next Conclave, they went over to the service of Spain.

Meanwhile Cæsar was signing a new treaty with Louis XII, by which he engaged to support him with all his forces, and even with his person, so soon as he could ride, in maintaining his conquest of Naples:

Louis, on his side, guaranteed that he should retain possession of the States he still held, and promised his help in recovering those he had lost.

The day when this treaty was made known, Gonzalvo di Cordovo proclaimed to the sound of a trumpet in all the streets of Rome that every Spanish subject serving in a foreign army was at once to break his engagement on pain of being found guilty of high treason.

This measure robbed Cæsar of ten or twelve of his best officers and of nearly 300 men.

Then the Orsini, seeing his army thus reduced, entered Rome, supported by the Spanish ambassador, and summoned Cæsar to appear before the pope and the Sacred College and give an account of his crimes.

Faithful to his engagements, Pius III replied that in his quality of sovereign prince the duke in his temporal administration was quite independent and was answerable for his actions to God alone.

But as the pope felt he could not much longer support Cæsar against his enemies for all his goodwill, he advised him to try to join the French army, which was still advancing on Naples, in the midst of which he would alone find safety. Cæsar resolved to retire to Bracciano, where Gian Giordano Orsino, who had once gone with him to France, and who was the only member of the family who had not declared

against him, offered him an asylum in the name of Cardinal d'Amboise: so one morning he ordered his troops to march for this town, and, taking his place in their midst, he left Rome.

But though Cæsar had kept his intentions quiet, the Orsini had been forewarned, and, taking out all the troops they had by the gate of San Pancracio, they had made a long détour and blocked Cæsar's way; so, when the latter arrived at Storta, he found the Orsini's army drawn up awaiting him in numbers exceeding his own by at least one-half.

Cæsar saw that to come to blows in his then feeble state was to rush on certain destruction; so he ordered his troops to retire, and, being a first-rate strategist, echelonned his retreat so skilfully that his enemies, though they followed, dared not attack him, and he re-entered the pontifical town without the loss of a single man.

This time Cæsar went straight to the Vatican, to put himself more directly under the pope's protection; he distributed his soldiers about the palace, so as to guard all its exits. Now the Orsini, resolved to make an end of Cæsar, had determined to attack him wheresoever he might be, with no regard to the sanctity of the place: this they attempted, but without success, as Cæsar's men kept a good guard on every side, and offered a strong defence.

Then the Orsini, not being able to force the guard

of the Castle Sant' Angelo, hoped to succeed better with the duke by leaving Rome and then returning by the Torione gate; but Cæsar anticipated this move, and they found the gate guarded and barricaded. None the less, they pursued their design, seeking by open violence the vengeance that they had hoped to obtain by craft; and, having surprised the approaches to the gate, set fire to it: a passage gained, they made their way into the gardens of the castle, where they found Cæsar awaiting them at the head of his cavalry.

Face to face with danger, the duke had found his old strength: and he was the first to rush upon his enemies, loudly challenging Orsino in the hope of killing him should they meet; but either Orsino did not hear him or dared not fight; and after an exciting contest, Cæsar, who was numerically two-thirds weaker than his enemy, saw his cavalry cut to pieces; and after performing miracles of personal strength and courage, was obliged to return to the Vatican. There he found the pope in mortal agony: the Orsini, tired of contending against the old man's word of honour pledged to the duke, had by the interposition of Pandolfo Petrucci, gained the ear of the pope's surgeon, who placed a poisoned plaster upon a wound in his leg.

The pope then was actually dying when Cæsar, covered with dust and blood, entered his room, pur-

sued by his enemies, who knew no check till they reached the palace walls, behind which the remnant of his army still held their ground.

Pius III, who knew he was about to die, sat up in his bed, gave Cæsar the key of the corridor which led to the Castle of Sant' Angelo, and an order addressed to the governor to admit him and his family, to defend him to the last extremity, and to let him go wherever he thought fit; and then fell fainting on his bed.

Cæsar took his two daughters by the hand, and, followed by the little dukes of Sermoneta and Nepi, took refuge in the last asylum open to him.

The same night the pope died: he had reigned only twenty-six days.

After his death, Cæsar, who had cast himself fully dressed upon his bed, heard his door open at two o'clock in the morning: not knowing what anyone might want of him at such an hour, he raised himself on one elbow and felt for the handle of his sword with his other hand; but at the first glance he recognised in his nocturnal visitor Giuliano della Rovere.

Utterly exhausted by the poison, abandoned by his troops, fallen as he was from the height of his power, Cæsar, who could now do nothing for himself, could yet make a pope: Giuliano della Rovere had come to buy the votes of his twelve cardinals.

Cæsar imposed his conditions, which were accepted.

If elected, Giuliano della Rovere was to help Cæsar to recover his territories in Romagna; Cæsar was to remain general of the Church; and Francesco Maria della Rovere, prefect of Rome, was to marry one of Cæsar's daughters.

On these conditions Cæsar sold his twelve cardinals to Giuliano.

The next day, at Giuliano's request, the Sacred College ordered the Orsini to leave Rome for the whole time occupied by the Conclave.

On the 31st of October 1503, at the first scrutiny, Giuliano della Rovere was elected pope, and took the name of Julius II.

He was scarcely installed in the Vatican when he made it his first care to summon Cæsar and give him his former rooms there; then, since the duke was fully restored to health, he began to busy himself with the re-establishment of his affairs, which had suffered sadly of late.

The defeat of his army and his own escape to Sant' Angelo, where he was supposed to be a prisoner, had brought about great changes in Romagna. Sesena was once more in the power of the Church, as formerly it had been; Gian Sforza had again entered Pesaro; Ordelafi had seized Forli; Malatesta was laying claim to Rimini; the inhabitants of Imola

had assassinated their governor, and the town was divided between two opinions, one that it should be put into the hands of the Riani, the other, into the hands of the Church; Faenza had remained loyal longer than any other place; but at last, losing hope of seeing Cæsar recover his power, it had summoned Francesco, a natural son of Galeotto Manfredi, the last surviving heir of this unhappy family, all whose legitimate descendants had been massacred by Borgia.

It is true that the fortresses of these different places had taken no part in these revolutions, and had remained immutably faithful to the Duke of Valentinois.

So it was not precisely the defection of these towns, which, thanks to their fortresses, might be reconquered, that was the cause of uneasiness to Cæsar and Julius II, it was the difficult situation that Venice had thrust upon them. Venice, in the spring of the same year, had signed a treaty of peace with the Turks: thus set free from her eternal enemy, she had just led her forces to the Romagna, which she had always coveted: these troops had been led towards Ravenna, the farthermost limit of the Papal estates, and put under the command of Giacopo Venieri, who had failed to capture Cesena, and had only failed through the courage of its inhabitants; but this check had been amply compensated by the

surrender of the fortresses of Val di Lamone and Faenza, by the capture of Forlimpopoli, and the surrender of Rimini, which Pandolfo Malatesta, its lord, exchanged for the seigniory of Cittadella, in the State of Padua, and for the rank of gentleman of Venice.

Then Cæsar made a proposition to Julius II: this was to make a momentary cession to the Church of his own estates in Romagna, so that the respect felt by the Venetians for the Church might save these towns from their aggressors; but, says Guicciardini, Julius II, whose ambition, so natural in sovereign rulers, had not yet extinguished the remains of rectitude, refused to accept the places, afraid of exposing himself to the temptation of keeping them later on, against his promises.

But as the case was urgent, he proposed to Cæsar that he should leave Rome, embark at Ostia, and cross over to Spezia, where Michelotto was to meet him at the head of 100 men-at-arms and 100 light horse, the only remnant of his magnificent army, thence by land to Ferrara, and from Ferrara to Imola, where, once arrived, he could utter his war-cry so loud that it would be heard through the length and breadth of Romagna.

This advice being after Cæsar's own heart, he accepted it at once.

The resolution submitted to the Sacred College

was approved, and Cæsar left for Ostia, accompanied by Bartolommeo della Rovere, nephew of His Holiness.

Cæsar at last felt he was free, and fancied himself already on his good charger, a second time carrying war into all the places where he had formerly fought. When he reached Ostia, he was met by the cardinals of Sorrento and Volterra, who came in the name of Julius II to ask him to give up the very same citadels which he had refused three days before: the fact was that the pope had learned in the interim that the Venetians had made fresh aggressions, and recognised that the method proposed by Cæsar was the only one that would check them. But this time it was Cæsar's turn to refuse, for he was weary of these tergiversations, and feared a trap; so he said that the surrender asked for would be useless, since by God's help he should be in Romagna before eight days were past. So the cardinals of Sorrento and Volterra returned to Rome with a refusal.

The next morning, just as Cæsar was setting foot on his vessel, he was arrested in the name of Julius II.

He thought at first that this was the end; he was used to this mode of action, and knew how short was the space between a prison and a tomb; the matter was all the easier in his case, because the pope, if he chose, would have plenty of pretext for making a case against him. But the heart of Julius was of

another kind from his; swift to anger, but open to clemency; so, when the duke came back to Rome guarded, the momentary irritation his refusal had caused was already calmed, and the pope received him in his usual fashion at his palace, and with his ordinary courtesy, although from the beginning it was easy for the duke to see that he was being watched. In return for this kind reception, Cæsar consented to yield the fortress of Cesena to the pope, as being a town which had once belonged to the Church, and now should return; giving the deed, signed by Cæsar, to one of his captains, called Pietro d'Oviedo, he ordered him to take possession of the fortress in the name of the Holy See. Pietro obeyed, and starting at once for Cesena, presented himself armed with his warrant before Don Diego Chiñon, a noble condottiere of Spain, who was holding the fortress in Cæsar's name. But when he had read over the paper that Pietro d'Oviedo brought, Don Diego replied that as he knew his lord and master was a prisoner, it would be disgraceful in him to obey an order that had probably been wrested from him by violence, and that the bearer deserved to die for undertaking such a cowardly office. He therefore bade his soldiers seize d'Oviedo and fling him down from the top of the walls: this sentence was promptly executed.

This mark of fidelity might have proved fatal to

Cæsar: when the pope heard how his messenger had been treated, he flew into such a rage that the prisoner thought a second time that his hour was come; and in order to receive his liberty, he made the first of those new propositions to Julius II, which were drawn up in the form of a treaty and sanctioned by a bull. By these arrangements, the Duke of Valentinois was bound to hand over to His Holiness, within the space of forty days, the fortresses of Cesena and Bertinoro, and authorise the surrender of Forli. This arrangement was guaranteed by two bankers in Rome who were to be responsible for 15,000 ducats, the sum total of the expenses which the governor pretended he had incurred in the place on the duke's account. The pope on his part engaged to send Cæsar to Ostia under the sole guard of the Cardinal of Santa Croce and two officers, who were to give him his full liberty on the very day when his engagements were fulfilled: should this not happen, Cæsar was to be taken to Rome and imprisoned in the Castle of Sant' Angelo. In fulfilment of this treaty, Cæsar went down the Tiber as far as Ostia, accompanied by the pope's treasurer and many of his servants. The Cardinal of Santa Croce followed, and the next day joined him there.

But as Cæsar feared that Julius II might keep him a prisoner, in spite of his pledged word, after he had

yielded up the fortresses, he asked, through the mediation of Cardinals Borgia and Remolino, who, not feeling safe at Rome, had retired to Naples, for a safe-conduct to Gonzalvo of Cordova, and for two ships to take him there; with the return of the courier the safe-conduct arrived, announcing that the ships would shortly follow.

In the midst of all this, the Cardinal of Santa Croce, learning that by the duke's orders the governors of Cesena and Bertinoro had surrendered their fortresses to the captains of His Holiness, relaxed his rigour, and knowing that his prisoner would some day or other be free, began to let him go out without a guard. Then Cæsar, feeling some fear lest when he started with Gonzalvo's ships the same thing might happen as on the occasion of his embarking on the pope's vessel—that is, that he might be arrested a second time—concealed himself in a house outside the town; and when night came on, mounting a wretched horse that belonged to a peasant, rode as far as Nettuno, and there hired a little boat, in which he embarked for Monte Dragone, and thence gained Naples. Gonzalvo received him with such joy that Cæsar was deceived as to his intention, and this time believed that he was really saved. His confidence was redoubled when, opening his designs to Gonzalvo, and telling him that he counted upon gaining Pisa and thence going on

into Romagna, Gonzalvo allowed him to recruit as many soldiers at Naples as he pleased, promising him two ships to embark with. Cæsar, deceived by these appearances, stopped nearly six weeks at Naples, every day seeing the Spanish governor and discussing his plans. But Gonzalvo was only waiting to gain time to tell the King of Spain that his enemy was in his hands; and Cæsar actually went to the castle to bid Gonzalvo good-bye, thinking he was just about to start after he had embarked his men on the two ships. The Spanish governor received him with his accustomed courtesy, wished him every kind of prosperity, and embraced him as he left; but at the door of the castle Cæsar found one of Gonzalvo's captains, Nuño Campejo by name, who arrested him as a prisoner of Ferdinand the Catholic. Cæsar at these words heaved a deep sigh, cursing the ill luck that had made him trust the word of an enemy when he had so often broken his own.

He was at once taken to the castle, where the prison gate closed behind him, and he felt no hope that anyone would come to his aid; for the only being who was devoted to him in this world was Michelotto, and he had heard that Michelotto had been arrested near Pisa by order of Julius II. While Cæsar was being taken to prison an officer came to him to deprive him of the safe-conduct given him by Gonzalvo.

The day after his arrest, which occurred on the 27th of May, 1504, Cæsar was taken on board a ship, which at once weighed anchor and set sail for Spain: during the whole voyage he had but one page to serve him, and as soon as he disembarked he was taken to the castle of Medina del Campo.

Ten years later, Gonzalvo, who at that time was himself proscribed, owned to Loxa on his dying bed that now, when he was to appear in the presence of God, two things weighed cruelly on his conscience: one was his treason to Ferdinand, the other his breach of faith towards Cæsar.

CHAPTER XVI

CÆSAR was in prison for two years, always hoping that Louis XII would reclaim him as peer of the kingdom of France; but Louis, much disturbed by the loss of the battle of Garigliano, which robbed him of the kingdom of Naples, had enough to do with his own affairs without busying himself with his cousin's. So the prisoner was beginning to despair, when one day as he broke his bread at breakfast he found a file and a little bottle containing a narcotic, with a letter from Michelotto, saying that he was out of prison and had left Italy for Spain, and now lay in hiding with the Count of Benevento in the neighbouring village: he added that from the next day forward he and the count would wait every night on the road between the fortress and the village with three excellent horses; it was now Cæsar's part to do the best he could with his bottle and file. When the whole world had abandoned the Duke of Romagna he had been remembered by a sbirro.

The prison where he had been shut up for two years was so hateful to Cæsar that he lost not a

single moment: the same day he attacked one of the bars of a window that looked out upon an inner court, and soon contrived so to manipulate it that it would need only a final push to come out. But not only was the window nearly seventy feet from the ground, but one could only get out of the court by using an exit reserved for the governor, of which he alone had the key; also this key never left him; by day it hung at his waist, by night it was under his pillow: this then was the chief difficulty.

But prisoner though he was, Cæsar had always been treated with the respect due to his name and rank: every day at the dinner-hour he was conducted from the room that served as his prison to the governor, who did the honours of the table in a grand and courteous fashion. The fact was that Don Manuel had served with honour under King Ferdinand, and therefore, while he guarded Cæsar rigorously, according to orders, he had a great respect for so brave a general, and took pleasure in listening to the accounts of his battles. So he had often insisted that Cæsar should not only dine but also breakfast with him; happily the prisoner, yielding perhaps to some presentiment, had till now refused this favour. This was of great advantage to him, since, thanks to his solitude, he had been able to receive the instruments of escape sent by Michelotto. The same day he received them, Cæsar, on going back to his room, made

a false step and sprained his foot; at the dinner-hour he tried to go down, but he pretended to be suffering so cruelly that he gave it up. The governor came to see him in his room, and found him stretched upon the bed.

The day after, he was no better; the governor had his dinner sent in, and came to see him, as on the night before; he found his prisoner so dejected and gloomy in his solitude that he offered to come and sup with him: Cæsar gratefully accepted.

This time it was the prisoner who did the honours: Cæsar was charmingly courteous; the governor thought he would profit by this lack of restraint to put to him certain questions as to the manner of his arrest, and asked him as an Old Castilian, for whom honour is still of some account, what the truth really was as to Gonzalvo's and Ferdinand's breach of faith with him. Cæsar appeared extremely inclined to give him his entire confidence, but showed by a sign that the attendants were in the way. This precaution appeared quite natural, and the governor took no offense, but hastened to send them all away, so as to be sooner alone with his companion. When the door was shut, Cæsar filled his glass and the governor's, proposing the king's health: the governor honoured the toast: Cæsar at once began his tale; but he had scarcely uttered a third part of it when, interesting as it was, the eyes of his host shut as

though by magic, and he slid under the table in a profound sleep.

After half a hour had passed, the servants, hearing no noise, entered and found the two, one on the table, the other under it: this event was not so extraordinary that they paid any great attention to it: all they did was to carry Don Manuel to his room and lift Cæsar on the bed; then they put away the remnant of the meal for the next day's supper, shut the door very carefully, and left their prisoner alone.

Cæsar stayed for a minute motionless and apparently plunged in the deepest sleep; but when he had heard the steps retreating, he quietly raised his head, opened his eyes, slipped off the bed, walked to the door, slowly indeed, but not to all appearance feeling the accident of the night before, and applied his ear for some minutes to the keyhole; then lifting his head with an expression of indescribable pride, he wiped his brow with his hand, and for the first time since his guards went out, breathed freely with full-drawn breaths.

There was no time to lose: his first care was to shut the door as securely on the inside as it was already shut on the outside, to blow out the lamp, to open the window, and to finish sawing through the bar. When this was done, he undid the bandages on his leg, took down the window and bed curtains, tore them into strips, joined the sheets, table napkins

and cloth, and with all these things tied together end to end, formed a rope fifty or sixty feet long, with knots every here and there. This rope he fixed securely to the bar next to the one he had just cut through; then he climbed up to the window and began what was really the hardest part of his perilous enterprise, clinging with hands and feet to this fragile support. Luckily he was both strong and skilful, and he went down the whole length of the rope without accident; but when he reached the end and was hanging on the last knot, he sought in vain to touch the ground with his feet; his rope was too short.

The situation was a terrible one: the darkness of the night prevented the fugitive from seeing how far off he was from the ground, and his fatigue prevented him from even attempting to climb up again. Cæsar put up a brief prayer, whether to God or Satan he alone could say; then letting go the rope, he dropped from a height of twelve or fifteen feet.

The danger was too great for the fugitive to trouble about a few trifling contusions: he at once rose, and guiding himself by the direction of his window, he went straight to the little door of exit; he then put his hand into the pocket of his doublet, and a cold sweat damped his brow; either he had forgotten and left it in his room or had lost it in his fall; anyhow, he had not the key.

But summoning his recollections, he quite gave up the first idea for the second, which was the only likely one: again he crossed the court, looking for the place where the key might have fallen, by the aid of the wall round a tank on which he had laid his hand when he got up; but the object of search was so small and the night so dark that there was little chance of getting any result; still Cæsar sought for it, for in this key was his last hope: suddenly a door was opened, and a night watch appeared, preceded by two torches. Cæsar for the moment thought he was lost, but remembering the tank behind him, he dropped into it, and with nothing but his head above water anxiously watched the movements of the soldiers, as they advanced beside him, passed only a few feet away, crossed the court, and then disappeared by an opposite door. But short as their luminous apparition had been, it had lighted up the ground, and Cæsar by the glare of the torches had caught the glitter of the long-sought key, and as soon as the door was shut behind the men, was again master of his liberty.

Half-way between the castle and the village two cavaliers and a led horse were waiting for him: the two men were Michelotto and the Count of Benevento. Cæsar sprang upon the riderless horse, pressed with fervour the hand of the count and the sbirro; then all three galloped to the frontier of

Navarre, where they arrived three days later, and were honourably received by the king, Jean d'Albret, the brother of Cæsar's wife.

From Navarre he thought to pass into France, and from France to make an attempt upon Italy, with the aid of Louis XII; but during Cæsar's detention in the castle of Medina del Campo, Louis had made peace with the King of Spain; and when he heard of Cæsar's flight, instead of helping him, as there was some reason to expect he would, since he was a relative by marriage, he took away the duchy of Valentinois and also his pension. Still, Cæsar had nearly 200,000 ducats in the charge of bankers at Genoa; he wrote asking for this sum, with which he hoped to levy troops in Spain and in Navarre, and make an attempt upon Pisa: 500 men, 200,000 ducats, his name and his word were more than enough to save him from despair.

The bankers denied the deposit.

Cæsar was at the mercy of his brother-in-law.

One of the vassals of the King of Navarre, named Prince Alarino, had just then revolted: Cæsar then took command of the army which Jean d'Albret was sending out against him, followed by Michelotto, who was as faithful in adversity as ever before. Thanks to Cæsar's courage and skilful tactics, Prince Alarino was beaten in a first encounter; but the day after his defeat he rallied his army, and offered

battle about three o'clock in the afternoon. Cæsar accepted it.

For nearly four hours they fought obstinately on both sides; but at length, as the day was going down, Cæsar proposed to decide the issue by making a charge himself, at the head of a hundred men-at-arms, upon a body of cavalry which made his adversary's chief force. To his great astonishment, this cavalry at the first shock gave way and took flight in the direction of a little wood, where they seemed to be seeking refuge. Cæsar followed close on their heels up to the edge of the forest; then suddenly the pursued turned right about face, three or four hundred archers came out of the wood to help them, and Cæsar's men, seeing that they had fallen into an ambush, took to their heels like cowards, and abandoned their leader.

Left alone, Cæsar would not budge one step; possibly he had had enough of life, and his heroism was rather the result of satiety than courage: however that may be, he defended himself like a lion; but, riddled with arrows and bolts, his horse at last fell, with Cæsar's leg under him. His adversaries rushed upon him, and one of them thrusting a sharp and slender iron pike through a weak place in his armour, pierced his breast; Cæsar cursed God and died.

But the rest of the enemy's army was defeated,

thanks to the courage of Michelotto, who fought like a valiant condottiere, but learned, on returning to the camp in the evening, from those who had fled, that they had abandoned Cæsar and that he had never reappeared. Then only too certain, from his master's well-known courage, that disaster had occurred, he desired to give one last proof of his devotion by not leaving his body to the wolves and birds of prey. Torches were lighted, for it was dark, and with ten or twelve of those who had gone with Cæsar as far as the little wood, he went to seek his master. On reaching the spot they pointed out, he beheld five men stretched side by side; four of them were dressed, but the fifth had been stripped of his clothing and lay completely naked. Michelotto dismounted, lifted the head upon his knees, and by the light of the torches recognised Cæsar.

Thus fell, on the 10th of March, 1507, on an unknown field, near an obscure village called Viane, in a wretched skirmish with the vassal of a petty king, the man whom Macchiavelli presents to all princes as the model of ability, diplomacy, and courage.

As to Lucrezia, the fair Duchess of Ferrara, she died full of years and honours, adored as a queen by her subjects, and sung as a goddess by Ariosto and by Bembo.

EPILOGUE

THERE was once in Paris, says Boccaccio, a brave and good merchant named Jean de Civigny, who did a great trade in drapery, and was connected in business with a neighbour and fellow-merchant, a very rich man called Abraham, who, though a Jew, enjoyed a good reputation. Jean de Civigny, appreciating the qualities of the worthy Israelite, feared lest, good man as he was, his false religion would bring his soul straight to eternal perdition; so he began to urge him gently as a friend to renounce his errors and open his eyes to the Christian faith, which he could see for himself was prospering and spreading day by day, being the only true and good religion; whereas his own creed, it was very plain, was so quickly diminishing that it would soon disappear from the face of the earth. The Jew replied that except in his own religion there was no salvation, that he was born in it, proposed to live and die in it, and that he knew nothing in the world that could change his opinion. Still, in his proselytising fervour Jean would not think himself beaten, and never a day passed but he demonstrated with those fair words the merchant uses to seduce a customer, the superiority of the

Christian religion above the Jewish; and although Abraham was a great master of Mosaic law, he began to enjoy his friend's preaching, either because of the friendship he felt for him or because the Holy Ghost descended upon the tongue of the new apostle; still obstinate in his own belief, he would not change. The more he persisted in his error, the more excited was Jean about converting him, so that at last, by God's help, being somewhat shaken by his friend's urgency, Abraham one day said—

"Listen, Jean: since you have it so much at heart that I should be converted, behold me disposed to satisfy you; but before I go to Rome to see him whom you call God's vicar on earth, I must study his manner of life and his morals, as also those of his brethren the cardinals; and if, as I doubt not, they are in harmony with what you preach, I will admit that, as you have taken such pains to show me, your faith is better than mine, and I will do as you desire; but if it should prove otherwise, I shall remain a Jew, as I was before; for it is not worth while, at my age, to change my belief for a worse one."

Jean was very sad when he heard these words; and he said mournfully to himself, "Now I have lost my time and pains, which I thought I had spent so well when I was hoping to convert this unhappy Abraham; for if he unfortunately goes, as he says he will, to the court of Rome, and there sees the

shameful life led by the servants of the Church, instead of becoming a Christian the Jew will be more of a Jew than ever." Then turning to Abraham, he said, "Ah, friend, why do you wish to incur such fatigue and expense by going to Rome, besides the fact that travelling by sea or by land must be very dangerous for so rich a man as you are? Do you suppose there is no one here to baptize you? If you have any doubts concerning the faith I have expounded, where better than here will you find theologians capable of contending with them and allaying them? So, you see, this voyage seems to me quite unnecessary: just imagine that the priests there are such as you see here, and all the better in that they are nearer to the supreme pastor. If you are guided by my advice, you will postpone this toil till you have committed some grave sin and need absolution; then you and I will go together."

But the Jew replied—

"I believe, dear Jean, that everything is as you tell me; but you know how obstinate I am. I will go to Rome, or I will never be a Christian."

Then Jean, seeing his great wish, resolved that it was no use trying to thwart him, and wished him good luck; but in his heart he gave up all hope; for it was certain that his friend would come back from his pilgrimage more of a Jew than ever, if the court of Rome was still as he had seen it.

But Abraham mounted his horse, and at his best speed took the road to Rome, where on his arrival he was wonderfully well received by his co-religionists; and after staying there a good long time, he began to study the behaviour of the pope, the cardinals and other prelates, and of the whole court. But much to his surprise he found out, partly by what passed under his eyes and partly by what he was told, that all from the pope downward to the lowest sacristan of St. Peter's were committing the sins of luxurious living in a most disgraceful and unbridled manner, with no remorse and no shame, so that pretty women and handsome youths could obtain any favours they pleased. In addition to this sensuality which they exhibited in public, he saw that they were gluttons and drunkards, so much so that they were more the slaves of the belly than are the greediest of animals. When he looked a little further, he found them so avaricious and fond of money that they sold for hard cash both human bodies and divine offices, and with less conscience than a man in Paris would sell cloth or any other merchandise. Seeing this and much more that it would not be proper to set down here, it seemed to Abraham, himself a chaste, sober, and upright man, that he had seen enough. So he resolved to return to Paris, and carried out the resolution with his

usual promptitude. Jean de Civigny held a great fête in honour of his return, although he had lost hope of his coming back converted. But he left time for him to settle down before he spoke of anything, thinking there would be plenty of time to hear the bad news he expected. But, after a few days of rest, Abraham himself came to see his friend, and Jean ventured to ask what he thought of the Holy Father, the cardinals, and the other persons at the pontifical court. At these words the Jew exclaimed, "God damn them all! I never once succeeded in finding among them any holiness, any devotion, any good works; but, on the contrary, luxurious living, avarice, greed, fraud, envy, pride, and even worse, if there is worse; all the machine seemed to be set in motion by an impulse less divine than diabolical. After what I saw, it is my firm conviction that your pope, and of course the others as well, are using all their talents, art, endeavours, to banish the Christian religion from the face of the earth, though they ought to be its foundation and support; and since, in spite of all the care and trouble they expend to arrive at this end, I see that your religion is spreading every day and becoming more brilliant and more pure, it is borne in upon me that the Holy Spirit Himself protects it as the only true and the most holy religion; this is why, deaf as you found me to your counsel and rebellious to your wish, I

am now, ever since I returned from this Sodom, firmly resolved on becoming a Christian. So let us go at once to the church, for I am quite ready to be baptized."

There is no need to say if Jean de Civigny, who expected a refusal, was pleased at this consent. Without delay he went with his godson to Nôtre Dame de Paris, where he prayed the first priest he met to administer baptism to his friend, and this was speedily done; and the new convert changed his Jewish name of Abraham into the Christian name of Jean; and as the neophyte, thanks to his journey to Rome, had gained a profound belief, his natural good qualities increased so greatly in the practice of our holy religion, that after leading an exemplary life he died in the full odour of sanctity.

This tale of Boccaccio's gives so admirable an answer to the charge of irreligion which some might make against us if they mistook our intentions, that as we shall not offer any other reply, we have not hesitated to present it entire as it stands to the eyes of our readers.

And let us never forget that if the papacy has had an Innocent VIII and an Alexander VI who are its shame, it has also had a Pius VII and a Gregory XVI who are its honour and glory.

THE CENCI

THE CENCI

1598

SHOULD you ever go to Rome and visit the villa Pamphili, no doubt, after having sought under its tall pines and along its canals the shade and freshness so rare in the capital of the Christian world, you will descend towards the Janiculum Hill by a charming road, in the middle of which you will find the Pauline fountain. Having passed this monument, and having lingered a moment on the terrace of the church of St. Peter Montorio, which commands the whole of Rome, you will visit the cloister of Bramante, in the middle of which, sunk a few feet below the level, is built, on the identical place where St. Peter was crucified, a little temple, half Greek, half Christian; you will thence ascend by a side door into the church itself. There, the attentive cicerone will show you, in the first chapel to the right, the Christ Scourged, by Sebastian del Piombo, and in the third chapel to the left, an Entombment by Fiammingo; having examined these two masterpieces at leisure, he will take you to each end of the transverse cross, and will show you—on one side a picture by Salviati, on slate, and on the other a work by Vasari; then, pointing out in melan-

choly tones a copy of Guido's Martyrdom of St. Peter on the high altar, he will relate to you how for three centuries the divine Raffaelle's Transfiguration was worshipped in that spot; how it was carried away by the French in 1809, and restored to the pope by the Allies in 1814. As you have already in all probability admired this masterpiece in the Vatican, allow him to expatiate, and search at the foot of the altar for a mortuary slab, which you will identify by a cross and the single word, *Orate;* under this gravestone is buried Beatrice Cenci, whose tragical story cannot but impress you profoundly.

She was the daughter of Francesco Cenci. Whether or not it be true that men are born in harmony with their epoch, and that some embody its good qualities and others its bad ones, it may nevertheless interest our readers to cast a rapid glance over the period which had just passed when the events which we are about to relate took place. Francesco Cenci will then appear to them as the diabolical incarnation of his time.

On the 11th of August, 1492, after the lingering death-agony of Innocent VIII, during which two hundred and twenty murders were committed in the streets of Rome, Alexander VI ascended the pontifical throne. Son of a sister of Pope Calixtus III, Roderigo Lenzuoli Borgia, before being created

cardinal, had five children by Rosa Vanozza, whom he afterwards caused to be married to a rich Roman. These children were—

Francis, Duke of Gandia;

Cæsar, bishop and cardinal, afterwards Duke of Valentinois;

Lucrezia, who was married four times: her first husband was Giovanni Sforza, lord of Pesaro, whom she left owing to his impotence; the second, Alfonso, Duke of Bisiglia, whom her brother Cæsar caused to be assassinated; the third, Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, from whom a second divorce separated her; finally, the fourth, Alfonso of Aragon, who was stabbed to death on the steps of the basilica of St. Peter, and afterwards, three weeks later, strangled, because he did not die soon enough from his wounds, which nevertheless were mortal;

Giofre, Count of Squillace, of whom little is known;

And, finally, a youngest son, of whom nothing at all is known.

The most famous of these three brothers was Cæsar Borgia. He had made every arrangement a plotter could make to be King of Italy at the death of his father the pope, and his measures were so carefully taken as to leave no doubt in his own mind as to the success of this vast project. Every chance was provided against, except one; but Satan himself

could hardly have foreseen this particular one. The reader will judge for himself.

The pope had invited Cardinal Adrien to supper in his vineyard on the Belvidere; Cardinal Adrien was very rich, and the pope wished to inherit his wealth, as he already had acquired that of the Cardinals of Sant' Angelo, Capua, and Modena. To effect this, Cæsar Borgia sent two bottles of poisoned wine to his father's cup-bearer, without taking him into his confidence; he only instructed him not to serve this wine till he himself gave orders to do so; unfortunately, during supper the cup-bearer left his post for a moment, and in this interval a careless butler served the poisoned wine to the pope, to Cæsar Borgia, and to Cardinal Corneto.

Alexander VI died some hours afterwards; Cæsar Borgia was confined to bed, and sloughed off his skin; while Cardinal Corneto lost his sight and his senses, and was brought to death's door.

Pius III succeeded Alexander VI, and reigned twenty-five days; on the twenty-sixth he was poisoned also.

Cæsar Borgia had under his control eighteen Spanish cardinals who owed to him their places in the Sacred College; these cardinals were entirely his creatures, and he could command them absolutely. As he was in a moribund condition and could make no use of them for himself, he sold them

to Giuliano della Rovere, and Giuliano della Rovere was elected pope, under the name of Julius II. To the Rome of Nero succeeded the Athens of Pericles.

Leo X succeeded Julius II, and under his pontificate Christianity assumed a pagan character, which, passing from art into manners, gives to this epoch a strange complexion. Crimes for the moment disappeared, to give place to vices; but to charming vices, vices in good taste, such as those indulged in by Alcibiades and sung by Catullus. Leo X died after having assembled under his reign, which lasted eight years, eight months, and nineteen days, Michael Angelo, Raffaelle, Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Titian, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolommeo, Giulio Romano, Ariosto, Guicciardini, and Macchiavelli.

Giulio di Medici and Pompeo Colonna had equal claims to succeed him. As both were skilful politicians, experienced courtiers, and moreover of real and almost equal merit, neither of them could obtain a majority, and the Conclave was prolonged almost indefinitely, to the great fatigue of the cardinals. So it happened one day that a cardinal, more tired than the rest, proposed to elect, instead of either Medici or Colonna, the son, some say of a weaver, others of a brewer of Utrecht, of whom no one had ever thought till then, and who was for the moment acting head of affairs in Spain, in the absence of

Charles the Fifth. The jest prospered in the ears of those who heard it; all the cardinals approved their colleague's proposal, and Adrien became pope by a mere accident.

He was a perfect specimen of the Flemish type, a regular Dutchman, and could not speak a word of Italian. When he arrived in Rome, and saw the Greek masterpieces of sculpture collected at vast cost by Leo x, he wished to break them to pieces, exclaiming, *"Sunt idola anticorum."* His first act was to despatch a papal nuncio, Francesco Cherigato, to the Diet of Nuremberg, convened to discuss the reforms of Luther, with instructions which give a vivid notion of the manners of the time.

"Candidly confess," said he, "that God has permitted this schism and this persecution on account of the sins of man, and especially those of priests and prelates of the Church; for we know that many abominable things have taken place in the Holy See."

Adrien wished to bring the Romans back to the simple and austere manners of the early Church, and with this object pushed reform to the minutest details. For instance, of the hundred grooms maintained by Leo x, he retained only a dozen, in order, he said, to have two more than the cardinals.

A pope like this could not reign long: he died after a year's pontificate. The morning after his

death his physician's door was found decorated with garlands of flowers, bearing this inscription: "To the liberator of his country."

Giulio di Medici and Pompeo Colonna were again rival candidates. Intrigues recommenced, and the Conclave was once more so divided that at one time the cardinals thought they could only escape the difficulty in which they were placed by doing what they had done before, and electing a third competitor; they were even talking about Cardinal Orsini, when Giulio di Medici, one of the rival candidates, hit upon a very ingenious expedient. He wanted only five votes; five of his partisans each offered to bet five of Colonna's a hundred thousand ducats to ten thousand against the election of Giulio di Medici. At the very first ballot after the wager, Giulio di Medici got the five votes he wanted; no objection could be made, the cardinals had not been bribed; they had made a bet, that was all.

Thus it happened, on the 18th of November, 1523, Giulio di Medici was proclaimed pope under the name of Clement VII. The same day, he generously paid the five hundred thousand ducats which his five partisans had lost.

It was under this pontificate, and during the seven months in which Rome, conquered by the Lutheran soldiers of the Constable of Bourbon, saw holy

things subjected to the most frightful profanations, that Francesco Cenci was born.

He was the son of Monsignor Nicolo Cenci, afterwards apostolic treasurer during the pontificate of Pius v. Under this venerable prelate, who occupied himself much more with the spiritual than the temporal administration of his kingdom, Nicolo Cenci took advantage of his spiritual head's abstraction of worldly matters to amass a net revenue of a hundred and sixty thousand piastres, about £32,000 of our money. Francesco Cenci, who was his only son, inherited this fortune.

His youth was spent under popes so occupied with the schism of Luther that they had no time to think of anything else. The result was, that Francesco Cenci, inheriting vicious instincts and master of an immense fortune which enabled him to purchase immunity, abandoned himself to all the evil passions of his fiery and passionate temperament. Five times during his profligate career imprisoned for abominable crimes, he only succeeded in procuring his liberation by the payment of two hundred thousand piastres, or about one million francs. It should be explained that popes at this time were in great need of money.

The lawless profligacy of Francesco Cenci first began seriously to attract public attention under the pontificate of Gregory XIII. This reign offered

marvellous facilities for the development of a reputation such as that which this reckless Italian Don Juan seemed bent on acquiring. Under the Bolognese Buoncampagno, a free hand was given to those able to pay both assassins and judges. Rape and murder were so common that public justice scarcely troubled itself with these trifling things, if nobody appeared to prosecute the guilty parties. The good Gregory had his reward for his easy-going indulgence; he was spared to rejoice over the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Francesco Cenci was at the time of which we are speaking a man of forty-four or forty-five years of age, about five feet four inches in height, symmetrically proportioned, and very strong, although rather thin; his hair was streaked with grey, his eyes were large and expressive, although the upper eyelids drooped somewhat; his nose was long, his lips were thin, and wore habitually a pleasant smile, except when his eye perceived an enemy; at this moment his features assumed a terrible expression; on such occasions, and whenever moved or even slightly irritated, he was seized with a fit of nervous trembling, which lasted long after the cause which provoked it had passed. An adept in all manly exercises and especially in horsemanship, he sometimes used to ride without stopping from Rome to Naples, a distance of forty-one leagues, passing through the

forest of San Germano and the Pontine marshes heedless of brigands, although he might be alone and unarmed save for his sword and dagger. When his horse fell from fatigue, he bought another; were the owner unwilling to sell he took it by force; if resistance were made, he struck, and always with the point, never the hilt. In most cases, being well known throughout the Papal States as a free-handed person, nobody tried to thwart him; some yielding through fear, others from motives of interest. Impious, sacrilegious, and atheistical, he never entered a church except to profane its sanctity. It was said of him that he had a morbid appetite for novelties in crime, and that there was no outrage he would not commit if he hoped by so doing to enjoy a new sensation.

At the age of about forty-five he had married a very rich woman, whose name is not mentioned by any chronicler. She died, leaving him seven children—five boys and two girls. He then married Lucrezia Petroni, a perfect beauty of the Roman type, except for the ivory pallor of her complexion. By this second marriage he had no children.

As if Francesco Cenci were void of all natural affection, he hated his children, and was at no pains to conceal his feelings towards them: on one occasion, when he was building, in the courtyard of his magnificent palace, near the Tiber, a chapel dedi-

cated to St. Thomas, he remarked to the architect, when instructing him to design a family vault, "That is where I hope to bury them all." The architect often subsequently admitted that he was so terrified by the fiendish laugh which accompanied these words, that had not Francesco Cenci's work been extremely profitable, he would have refused to go on with it.

As soon as his three eldest boys, Giacomo, Cristoforo, and Rocco, were out of their tutors' hands, in order to get rid of them he sent them to the University of Salamanca, where, out of sight, they were out of mind, for he thought no more about them, and did not even send them the means of subsistence. In these straits, after struggling for some months against their wretched plight, the lads were obliged to leave Salamanca, and beg their way home, tramping barefoot through France and Italy, till they made their way back to Rome, where they found their father harsher and more unkind than ever.

This happened in the early part of the reign of Clement VIII, famed for his justice. The three youths resolved to apply to him, to grant them an allowance out of their father's immense income. They consequently repaired to Frascati, where the pope was building the beautiful Aldobrandini Villa, and stated their case. The pope admitted the justice of their claims, and ordered Francesco to allow

each of them two thousand crowns a year. He endeavoured by every possible means to evade this decree, but the pope's orders were too stringent to be disobeyed.

About this period he was for the third time imprisoned for infamous crimes. His three sons then again petitioned the pope, alleging that their father dishonoured the family name, and praying that the extreme rigour of the law, a capital sentence, should be enforced in his case. The pope pronounced this conduct unnatural and odious, and drove them with ignominy from his presence. As for Francesco, he escaped, as on the two previous occasions, by the payment of a large sum of money.

It will be readily understood that his sons' conduct on this occasion did not improve their father's disposition towards them, but as their independent pensions enabled them to keep out of his way, his rage fell with all the greater intensity on his two unhappy daughters. Their situation soon became so intolerable, that the elder, contriving to elude the close supervision under which she was kept, forwarded to the pope a petition, relating the cruel treatment to which she was subjected, and praying His Holiness either to give her in marriage or place her in a convent. Clement VIII took pity on her; compelled Francesco Cenci to give her a dowry of sixty thousand crowns, and married her to Carlo

Gabrielli, of a noble family of Gubbio. Francesco was driven nearly frantic with rage when he saw this victim released from his clutches.

About the same time death relieved him from two other encumbrances: his sons Rocco and Cristoforo were killed within a year of each other; the latter by a bungling medical practitioner whose name is unknown; the former by Paolo Corso di Massa, in the streets of Rome. This came as a relief to Francesco, whose avarice pursued his sons even after their death, for he intimated to the priest that he would not spend a farthing on funeral services. They were accordingly borne to the paupers' graves which he had caused to be prepared for them, and when he saw them both interred, he cried out that he was well rid of such good-for-nothing children, but that he should be perfectly happy only when the remaining five were buried with the first two, and that when he had got rid of the last he himself would burn down his palace as a bonfire to celebrate the event.

But Francesco took every precaution against his second daughter, Beatrice Cenci, following the example of her elder sister. She was then a child of twelve or thirteen years of age, beautiful and innocent as an angel. Her long fair hair, a beauty seen so rarely in Italy, that Raffaelle, believing it divine, has appropriated it to all his Madonnas, curtained a

lovely forehead, and fell in flowing locks over her shoulders. Her azure eyes bore a heavenly expression; she was of middle height, exquisitely proportioned; and during the rare moments when a gleam of happiness allowed her natural character to display itself, she was lively, joyous, and sympathetic, but at the same time evinced a firm and decided disposition.

To make sure of her custody, Francesco kept her shut up in a remote apartment of his palace, the key of which he kept in his own possession. There, her unnatural and inflexible gaoler daily brought her some food. Up to the age of thirteen, which she had now reached, he had behaved to her with the most extreme harshness and severity; but now, to poor Beatrice's great astonishment, he all at once became gentle and even tender. Beatrice was a child no longer; her beauty expanded like a flower; and Francesco, a stranger to no crime, however heinous, had marked her for his own.

Brought up as she had been, uneducated, deprived of all society, even that of her stepmother, Beatrice knew not good from evil: her ruin was comparatively easy to compass; yet Francesco, to accomplish his diabolical purpose, employed all the means at his command. Every night she was awakened by a concert of music which seemed to come from Paradise. When she mentioned this to her father,

he left her in this belief, adding that if she proved gentle and obedient she would be rewarded by heavenly sights as well as heavenly sounds.

One night it came to pass that as the young girl was reposing, her head supported on her elbow, and listening to a delightful harmony, the chamber door suddenly opened, and from the darkness of her own room she beheld a suite of apartments brilliantly illuminated, and sensuous with perfumes; beautiful youths and girls, half clad, such as she had seen in the pictures of Guido and Raffaelle, moved to and fro in these apartments, seeming full of joy and happiness: these were the ministers to the pleasures of Francesco, who, rich as a king, every night revelled in the orgies of Alexander, the wedding revels of Lucrezia, and the excesses of Tiberius at Capri. After an hour, the door closed, and the seductive vision vanished, leaving Beatrice full of trouble and amazement.

The night following, the same apparition again presented itself, only, on this occasion, Francesco Cenci, undressed, entered his daughter's room and invited her to join the fête. Hardly knowing what she did, Beatrice yet perceived the impropriety of yielding to her father's wishes: she replied that, not seeing her stepmother, Lucrezia Petroni, among all these women, she dared not leave her bed to mix with persons who were unknown to her. Fran-

cesco threatened and prayed, but threats and prayers were of no avail. Beatrice wrapped herself up in the bedclothes, and obstinately refused to obey.

The next night she threw herself on her bed without undressing. At the accustomed hour the door opened, and the nocturnal spectacle reappeared. This time, Lucrezia Petroni was among the women who passed before Beatrice's door; violence had compelled her to undergo this humiliation. Beatrice was too far off to see her blushes and her tears. Francesco pointed out her stepmother, whom she had looked for in vain the previous evening; and as she could no longer make any opposition, he led her, covered with blushes and confusion, into the middle of this orgy.

Beatrice there saw incredible and infamous things. . . .

Nevertheless, she resisted a long time: an inward voice told her that this was horrible; but Francesco had the slow persistence of a demon. To these sights, calculated to stimulate her passions, he added heresies designed to warp her mind; he told her that the greatest saints venerated by the Church were the issue of fathers and daughters, and in the end Beatrice committed a crime without even knowing it to be a sin.

His brutality then knew no bounds. He forced

Lucrezia and Beatrice to share the same bed, threatening his wife to kill her if she disclosed to his daughter by a single word that there was anything odious in such an intercourse. So matters went on for about three years.

At this time Francesco was obliged to make a journey, and leave the women alone and free. The first thing Lucrezia did was to enlighten Beatrice on the infamy of the life they were leading; they then together prepared a memorial to the pope, in which they laid before him a statement of all the blows and outrages they had suffered. But, before leaving, Francesco Cenci had taken precautions; every person about the pope was in his pay, or hoped to be. The petition never reached His Holiness, and the two poor women, remembering that Clement VIII had on a former occasion driven Giacomo, Cristoforo, and Rocco from his presence, thought they were included in the same proscription, and looked upon themselves as abandoned to their fate.

When matters were in this state, Giacomo, taking advantage of his father's absence, came to pay them a visit with a friend of his, an abbé named Guerra: he was a young man of twenty-five or twenty-six, belonging to one of the most noble families in Rome, of a bold, resolute, and courageous character, and idolised by all the Roman ladies

for his beauty. To classical features he added blue eyes swimming in poetic sentiment; his hair was long and fair, with chestnut beard and eyebrows; add to these attractions a highly educated mind, natural eloquence expressed by a musical and penetrating voice, and the reader may form some idea of Monsignor the Abbé Guerra.

No sooner had he seen Beatrice than he fell in love with her. On her side, she was not slow to return the sympathy of the young priest. The Council of Trent had not been held at that time, consequently ecclesiastics were not precluded from marriage. It was therefore decided that on the return of Francesco the Abbé Guerra should demand the hand of Beatrice from her father, and the women, happy in the absence of their master, continued to live on, hoping for better things to come.

After three or four months, during which no one knew where he was, Francesco returned. The very first night, he wished to resume his intercourse with Beatrice; but she was no longer the same person, the timid and submissive child had become a girl of decided will; strong in her love for the abbé, she resisted alike prayers, threats, and blows.

The wrath of Francesco fell upon his wife, whom he accused of betraying him; he gave her a violent thrashing. Lucrezia Petroni was a veritable

Roman she-wolf, passionate alike in love and vengeance; she endured all, but pardoned nothing.

Some days after this, the Abbé Guerra arrived at the Cenci palace to carry out what had been arranged. Rich, young, noble, and handsome, everything would seem to promise him success; yet he was rudely dismissed by Francesco. The first refusal did not daunt him; he returned to the charge a second time and yet a third, insisting upon the suitableness of such a union. At length Francesco, losing patience, told this obstinate lover that a reason existed why Beatrice could be neither his wife nor any other man's. Guerra demanded what this reason was. Francesco replied—

"Because she is my mistress."

Monsignor Guerra turned pale at this answer, although at first he did not believe a word of it; but when he saw the smile with which Francesco Cenci accompanied his words, he was compelled to believe that, terrible though it was, the truth had been spoken.

For three days he sought an interview with Beatrice in vain; at length he succeeded in finding her. His last hope was her denial of this horrible story: Beatrice confessed all. Henceforth there was no human hope for the two lovers; an impassable gulf separated them. They parted bathed in tears, promising to love one another always.

Up to that time the two women had not formed any criminal resolution, and possibly the tragical incident might never have happened, had not Francesco one night returned into his daughter's room and violently forced her into the commission of fresh crime.

Henceforth the doom of Francesco was irrevocably pronounced.

As we have said, the mind of Beatrice was susceptible to the best and the worst influences: it could attain excellence, and descend to guilt. She went and told her mother of the fresh outrage she had undergone; this roused in the heart of the other woman the sting of her own wrongs; and, stimulating each other's desire for revenge, they decided upon the murder of Francesco.

Guerra was called in to this council of death. His heart was a prey to hatred and revenge. He undertook to communicate with Giacomo Cenci, without whose concurrence the women would not act, as he was the head of the family, when his father was left out of account.

Giacomo entered readily into the conspiracy. It will be remembered what he had formerly suffered from his father; since that time he had married, and the close-fisted old man had left him, with his wife and children, to languish in poverty. Guerra's house was selected to meet in and concert matters.

Giacomo hired a sbirro named Marzio, and Guerra a second named Olympio.

Both these men had private reasons for committing the crime—one being actuated by love, the other by hatred. Marzio, who was in the service of Giacomo, had often seen Beatrice, and loved her, but with that silent and hopeless love which devours the soul. When he conceived that the proposed crime would draw him nearer to Beatrice, he accepted his part in it without any demur.

As for Olympio, he hated Francesco, because the latter had caused him to lose the post of castellan of Rocco Petrella, a fortified stronghold in the kingdom of Naples, belonging to Prince Colonna. Almost every year Francesco Cenci spent some months at Rocco Petrella with his family; for Prince Colonna, a noble and magnificent but needy prince, had much esteem for Francesco, whose purse he found extremely useful. It had so happened that Francesco, being dissatisfied with Olympio, complained about him to Prince Colonna, and he was dismissed.

After several consultations between the Cenci family, the abbé and the sbirri, the following plan of action was decided upon.

The period when Francesco Cenci was accustomed to go to Rocco Petrella was approaching: it was arranged that Olympio, conversant with the

district and its inhabitants, should collect a party of a dozen Neapolitan bandits, and conceal them in a forest through which the travellers would have to pass. Upon a given signal, the whole family were to be seized and carried off. A heavy ransom was to be demanded, and the sons were to be sent back to Rome to raise the sum; but, under pretext of inability to do so, they were to allow the time fixed by the bandits to lapse, when Francesco was to be put to death. Thus all suspicions of a plot would be avoided, and the real assassins would escape justice.

This well-devised scheme was nevertheless unsuccessful. When Francesco left Rome, the scout sent in advance by the conspirators could not find the bandits; the latter, not being warned beforehand, failed to come down before the passage of the travellers, who arrived safe and sound at Rocco Petrella. The bandits, after having patrolled the road in vain, came to the conclusion that their prey had escaped, and, unwilling to stay any longer in a place where they had already spent a week, went off in quest of better luck elsewhere.

Francesco had in the meantime settled down in the fortress, and, to be more free to tyrannise over Lucrezia and Beatrice, sent back to Rome Giacomo and his two other sons. He then recommenced his infamous attempts upon Beatrice, and with such persistence, that she resolved herself to accom-

plish the deed which at first she desired to entrust to other hands.

Olympio and Marzio, who had nothing to fear from justice, remained lurking about the castle; one day Beatrice saw them from a window, and made signs that she had something to communicate to them. The same night Olympio, who having been castellan knew all the approaches to the fortress, made his way there with his companion. Beatrice awaited them at a window which looked on to a secluded courtyard; she gave them letters which she had written to her brother and to Monsignor Guerra. The former was to approve, as he had done before, the murder of their father; for she would do nothing without his sanction. As for Monsignor Guerra, he was to pay Olympio a thousand piastres, half the stipulated sum; Marzio acting out of pure love for Beatrice, whom he worshipped as a Madonna; which observing, the girl gave him a handsome scarlet mantle, trimmed with gold lace, telling him to wear it for love of her. As for the remaining moiety, it was to be paid when the death of the old man had placed his wife and daughter in possession of his fortune.

The two sbirri departed, and the imprisoned conspirators anxiously awaited their return. On the day fixed, they were seen again. Monsignor Guerra had paid the thousand piastres, and Giacomo had

given his consent. Nothing now stood in the way of the execution of this terrible deed, which was fixed for the 8th of September, the day of the Nativity of the Virgin; but Signora Lucrezia, a very devout person, having noticed this circumstance, would not be a party to the committal of a double sin; the matter was therefore deferred till the next day, the 9th.

That evening, the 9th of September, 1598, the two women, supping with the old man, mixed some narcotic with his wine so adroitly that, suspicious though he was, he never detected it, and having swallowed the potion, soon fell into a deep sleep.

The evening previous, Marzio and Olympio had been admitted into the castle, where they had lain concealed all night and all day; for, as will be remembered, the assassination would have been effected the day before had it not been for the religious scruples of Signora Lucrezia Petroni. Towards midnight, Beatrice fetched them out of their hiding-place, and took them to her father's chamber, the door of which she herself opened. The assassins entered, and the two women awaited the issue in the room adjoining.

After a moment, seeing the sbirri reappear pale and nerveless, shaking their heads without speaking, they at once inferred that nothing had been done.

"What is the matter?" cried Beatrice; "and what hinders you?"

"It is a cowardly act," replied the assassins, "to kill a poor old man in his sleep. At the thought of his age, we were struck with pity."

Then Beatrice disdainfully raised her head, and in a deep firm voice thus reproached them:—

"Is it possible that you, who pretend to be brave and strong, have not courage enough to kill a sleeping old man? How would it be if he were awake? And thus you steal our money! Very well: since your cowardice compels me to do so, I will kill my father myself; but you will not long survive him."

Hearing these words, the sbirri felt ashamed of their irresolution, and, indicating by signs that they would fulfil their compact, they entered the room, accompanied by the two women. As they had said, a ray of moonlight shone through the open window, and brought into prominence the tranquil face of the old man, the sight of whose white hair had so affected them.

This time they showed no mercy. One of them carried two great nails, such as those portrayed in pictures of the Crucifixion; the other bore a mallet: the first placed a nail upright over one of the old man's eyes; the other struck it with the hammer, and drove it into his head. The throat was pierced in the same way with the second nail; and thus the

guilty soul, stained throughout its career with crimes of violence, was in its turn violently torn from the body, which lay writhing on the floor where it had rolled.

The young girl then, faithful to her word, handed the sbirri a large purse containing the rest of the sum agreed upon, and they left.

When they found themselves alone, the women drew the nails out of the wounds, wrapped the corpse in a sheet, and dragged it through the rooms towards a small rampart, intending to throw it down into a garden which had been allowed to run to waste. They hoped that the old man's death would be attributed to his having accidentally fallen off the terrace on his way in the dark to a closet at the end of the gallery. But their strength failed them when they reached the door of the last room, and, while resting there, Lucrezia perceived the two sbirri, sharing the money before making their escape. At her call they came to her, carried the corpse to the rampart, and, from a spot pointed out by the women, where the terrace was unfenced by any parapet, they threw it into an elder tree below, whose branches retained it suspended.

When the body was found the following morning hanging in the branches of the elder tree, everybody supposed, as Beatrice and her stepmother had foreseen, that Francesco, stepping over the edge of the

terrace in the dark, had thus met his end. The body was so scratched and disfigured that no one noticed the wounds made by the two nails. The ladies, as soon as the news was imparted to them, came out from their rooms, weeping and lamenting in so natural a manner as to disarm any suspicions. The only person who formed any was the laundress to whom Beatrice entrusted the sheet in which her father's body had been wrapped, accounting for its bloody condition by a lame explanation, which the laundress accepted without question, or pretended to do so; and immediately after the funeral, the mourners returned to Rome, hoping at length to enjoy quietude and peace.

For some time, indeed, they did enjoy tranquillity, perhaps poisoned by remorse, but ere long retribution pursued them. The court of Naples, hearing of the sudden and unexpected death of Francesco Cenci, and conceiving some suspicions of violence, despatched a royal commissioner to Petrella to exhume the body and make minute inquiries, if there appeared to be adequate grounds for doing so. On his arrival all the domestics in the castle were placed under arrest and sent in chains to Naples. No incriminating proofs, however, were found, except in the evidence of the laundress, who deposed that Beatrice had given her a bloodstained sheet to wash. This clue led to terrible con-

sequences; for, further questioned, she declared that she could not believe the explanation given to account for its condition. The evidence was sent to the Roman court; but at that period it did not appear strong enough to warrant the arrest of the Cenci family, who remained undisturbed for many months, during which time the youngest boy died. Of the five brothers there only remained Giacomo, the eldest, and Bernardo, the youngest but one. Nothing prevented them from escaping to Venice or Florence; but they remained quietly in Rome.

Meantime Monsignor Guerra received private information that, shortly before the death of Francesco, Marzio and Olympio had been seen prowling round the castle, and that the Neapolitan police had received orders to arrest them.

The monsignor was a most wary man, and very difficult to catch napping when warned in time. He immediately hired two other sbirri to assassinate Marzio and Olympio. The one commissioned to put Olympio out of the way came across him at Terni, and conscientiously did his work with a poniard, but Marzio's man unfortunately arrived at Naples too late, and found his bird already in the hands of the police.

He was put to the torture, and confessed everything. His deposition was sent to Rome, whither he

shortly afterwards followed it, to be confronted with the accused. Warrants were immediately issued for the arrest of Giacomo, Bernardo, Lucrezia, and Beatrice; they were at first confined in the Cenci palace under a strong guard, but the proofs against them becoming stronger and stronger, they were removed to the castle of Corte Savella, where they were confronted with Marzio; but they obstinately denied both any complicity in the crime and any knowledge of the assassin. Beatrice, above all, displayed the greatest assurance, demanding to be the first to be confronted with Marzio, whose mendacity she affirmed with such calm dignity, that he, more than ever smitten by her beauty, determined, since he could not live for her, to save her by his death. Consequently, he declared all his statements to be false, and asked forgiveness from God and from Beatrice; neither threats nor tortures could make him recant, and he died firm in his denial, under frightful tortures. The Cenci then thought themselves safe.

God's justice, however, still pursued them. The sbirro who had killed Olympio happened to be arrested for another crime, and, making a clean breast, confessed that he had been employed by Monsignor Guerra to put out of the way a fellow-assassin named Olympio, who knew too many of the monsignor's secrets.

Luckily for himself, Monsignor Guerra heard of this opportunely. A man of infinite resource, he lost not a moment in timid or irresolute plans, but as it happened that at the very moment when he was warned, the charcoal dealer who supplied his house with fuel was at hand, he sent for him, purchased his silence with a handsome bribe, and then, buying for almost their weight in gold the dirty old clothes which he wore, he assumed these, cut off all his beautiful cherished fair hair, stained his beard, smudged his face, bought two asses, laden with charcoal, and limped up and down the streets of Rome, crying, "Charcoal! charcoal!" Then, whilst all the detectives were hunting high and low for him, he got out of the city, met a company of merchants under escort, joined them, and reached Naples, where he embarked. What ultimately became of him was never known; it has been asserted, but without confirmation, that he succeeded in reaching France, and enlisted in a Swiss regiment in the pay of Henry IV.

The confession of the sbirro and the disappearance of Monsignor Guerra left no moral doubt of the guilt of the Cenci. They were consequently sent from the castle to the prison; the two brothers, when put to the torture, broke down and confessed their guilt. Lucrezia Petroni's full habit of body rendered her unable to bear the torture of the rope,

and, on being suspended in the air, begged to be lowered, when she confessed all she knew.

As for Beatrice, she continued unmoved; neither promises, threats, nor torture had any effect upon her; she bore everything unflinchingly, and the judge Ulysse Moscati himself, famous though he was in such matters, failed to draw from her a single incriminating word. Unwilling to take any further responsibility, he referred the case to Clement VIII; and the pope, conjecturing that the judge had been too lenient in applying the torture to a young and beautiful noble Roman lady, took it out of his hands and entrusted it to another judge, whose severity and insensibility to emotion were undisputed.

This latter reopened the whole interrogatory, and as Beatrice up to that time had only been subjected to the ordinary torture, he gave instructions to apply both the ordinary and extraordinary. This was the rope and pulley, one of the most terrible inventions ever devised by the most ingenious of tormentors.

To make the nature of this horrid torture plain to our readers, we give a detailed description of it, adding an extract of the presiding judge's report of the case, taken from the Vatican manuscripts.

Of the various forms of torture then used in

Rome the most common were the whistle, the fire, the sleepless, and the rope.

The mildest, the torture of the whistle, was used only in the case of children and old persons; it consisted in thrusting between the nails and the flesh reeds cut in the shape of whistles.

The fire, frequently employed before the invention of the sleepless torture, was simply roasting the soles of the feet before a hot fire.

The sleepless torture, invented by Marsilius, was worked by forcing the accused into an angular frame of wood about five feet high, the sufferer being stripped and his arms tied behind his back to the frame; two men, relieved every five hours, sat beside him, and roused him the moment he closed his eyes. Marsilius says he has never found a man proof against this torture; but here he claims more than he is justly entitled to. Farinacci states that, out of one hundred accused persons subjected to it, five only refused to confess—a very satisfactory result for the inventor.

Lastly comes the torture of the rope and pulley, the most in vogue of all, and known in other Latin countries as the strappado.

It was divided into three degrees of intensity—the slight, the severe, and the very severe.

The first, or slight torture, which consisted mainly in the apprehensions it caused, comprised the threat

of severe torture, introduction into the torture chamber, stripping, and the tying of the rope in readiness for its appliance. To increase the terror these preliminaries excited, a pang of physical pain was added by tightening a cord round the wrists. This often sufficed to extract a confession from women or men of highly strung nerves.

The second degree, or severe torture, consisted in fastening the sufferer, stripped naked, and his hands tied behind his back, by the wrists to one end of a rope passed round a pulley bolted into the vaulted ceiling, the other end being attached to a windlass, by turning which he could be hoisted into the air, and dropped again, either slowly or with a jerk, as ordered by the judge. The suspension generally lasted during the recital of a Pater Noster, an Ave Maria, or a Miserere; if the accused persisted in his denial, it was doubled. This second degree, the last of the ordinary torture, was put in practice when the crime appeared reasonably probable but was not absolutely proved.

The third, or very severe, the first of the extraordinary forms of torture, was so called when the sufferer, having hung suspended by the wrists, for sometimes a whole hour, was swung about by the executioner, either like the pendulum of a clock, or by elevating him with the windlass and dropping him to within a foot or two of the ground. If he

stood this torture, a thing almost unheard of, seeing that it cut the flesh of the wrist to the bone and dislocated the limbs, weights were attached to the feet, thus doubling the torture. This last form of torture was only applied when an atrocious crime had been proved to have been committed upon a sacred person, such as a priest, a cardinal, a prince, or an eminent and learned man.

Having seen that Beatrice was sentenced to the torture ordinary and extraordinary, and having explained the nature of these tortures, we proceed to quote the official report:—

"And as in reply to every question she would confess nothing, we caused her to be taken by two officers and led from the prison to the torture chamber, where the torturer was in attendance; there, after cutting off her hair, he made her sit on a small stool, undressed her, pulled off her shoes, tied her hands behind her back, fastened them to a rope passed over a pulley bolted into the ceiling of the aforesaid chamber, and wound up at the other end by a four lever windlass, worked by two men.

"Before hoisting her from the ground we again interrogated her touching the aforesaid parricide; but notwithstanding the confessions of her brother and her stepmother, which were again produced, bearing their signatures, she persisted in denying everything, saying, 'Haul me about and do what

you like with me; I have spoken the truth, and will tell you nothing else, even if I were torn to pieces.'

"Upon this we had her hoisted in the air by the wrists to the height of about two feet from the ground, while we recited a Pater Noster; and then again questioned her as to the facts and circumstances of the aforesaid parricide; but she would make no further answer, only saying, 'You are killing me! You are killing me!'

"We then raised her to the elevation of four feet, and began an Ave Maria. But before our prayer was half finished she fainted away, or pretended to do so.

"We caused a bucketful of water to be thrown over her head; feeling its coolness, she recovered consciousness, and cried, 'My God! I am dead! You are killing me! My God!' But this was all she would say.

"We then raised her higher still, and recited a Miserere, during which, instead of joining in the prayer, she shook convulsively and cried several times, 'My God! My God!'

"Again questioned as to the aforesaid parricide, she would confess nothing, saying only that she was innocent, and then again fainted away.

"We caused more water to be thrown over her; then she recovered her senses, opened her eyes, and cried, 'O cursed executioners! You are killing me!

You are killing me!' But nothing more would she say.

"Seeing which, and that she persisted in her denial, we ordered the torturer to proceed to the torture by jerks.

"He accordingly hoisted her ten feet from the ground, and when there we enjoined her to tell the truth; but whether she would not or could not speak, she answered only by a motion of the head indicating that she could say nothing.

"Seeing which, we made a sign to the executioner to let go the rope, and she fell with all her weight from the height of ten feet to that of two feet; her arms, from the shock, were dislocated from their sockets; she uttered a loud cry, and swooned away.

"We again caused water to be dashed in her face; she returned to herself, and again cried out, 'Infamous assassins! You are killing me; but were you to tear out my arms, I would tell you nothing else.'

"Upon this, we ordered a weight of fifty pounds to be fastened to her feet. But at this moment the door opened, and many voices cried, 'Enough! Enough! Do not torture her any more!'"

These voices were those of Giacomo, Bernardo, and Lucrezia Petroni. The judges, perceiving the obstinacy of Beatrice, had ordered that the accused,

who had been separated for five months, should be confronted.

They advanced into the torture chamber, and seeing Beatrice hanging by the wrists, her arms disjointed, and covered with blood, Giacomo cried out—

"The sin is committed; nothing further remains but to save our souls by repentance, undergo death courageously, and not suffer you to be thus tortured."

Then said Beatrice, shaking her head as if to cast off grief—

"Do you then wish to die? Since you wish it, be it so."

Then turning to the officers—

"Untie me," said she, "read the examination to me; and what I have to confess, I will confess; what I have to deny, I will deny."

Beatrice was then lowered and untied; a barber reduced the dislocation of her arms in the usual manner; the examination was read over to her, and, as she had promised, she made a full confession.

After this confession, at the request of the two brothers, they were all confined in the same prison; but the next day Giacomo and Bernardo were taken to the cells of Tordinona; as for the women, they remained where they were.

The pope was so horrified on reading the par-

ticulars of the crime contained in the confessions, that he ordered the culprits to be dragged by wild horses through the streets of Rome. But so barbarous a sentence shocked the public mind, so much so that many persons of princely rank petitioned the Holy Father on their knees, imploring him to reconsider his decree, or at least allow the accused to be heard in their defence.

"Tell me," replied Clement VIII, "did they give their unhappy father time to be heard in his own defence, when they slew him in so merciless and degrading a fashion?"

At length, overcome by so many entreaties, he respited them for three days.

The most eloquent and skilful advocates in Rome immediately busied themselves in preparing pleadings for so emotional a case, and on the day fixed for hearing appeared before His Holiness.

The first pleader was Nicolo degli Angeli, who spoke with such force and eloquence that the pope, alarmed at the effect he was producing among the audience, passionately interrupted him.

"Are there then to be found," he indignantly cried, "among the Roman nobility children capable of killing their parents, and among Roman lawyers men capable of speaking in their defence? This is a thing we should never have believed, nor even for a moment supposed it possible!"

All were silent upon this terrible rebuke, except Farinacci, who, nerving himself with a strong sense of duty, replied respectfully but firmly—

"Most Holy Father, we are not here to defend criminals, but to save the innocent; for if we succeeded in proving that any of the accused acted in self-defence, I hope that they will be exonerated in the eyes of your Holiness; for just as the law provides for cases in which the father may legally kill the child, so this holds good in the converse. We will therefore continue our pleadings on receiving leave from your Holiness to do so."

Clement VIII then showed himself as patient as he had previously been hasty, and heard the argument of Farinacci, who pleaded that Francesco Cenci had lost all the rights of a father from the day that he violated his daughter. In support of his contention he wished to put in the memorial sent by Beatrice to His Holiness, petitioning him, as her sister had done, to remove her from the paternal roof and place her in a convent. Unfortunately, this petition had disappeared, and notwithstanding the minutest search among the papal documents, no trace of it could be found.

The pope had all the pleadings collected, and dismissed the advocates, who then retired, excepting d'Altieri, who knelt before him, saying—

"Most Holy Father, I humbly ask pardon for ap-

pearing before you in this case, but I had no choice in the matter, being the advocate of the poor."

The pope kindly raised him, saying—

"Go; we are not surprised at your conduct, but at that of others, who protect and defend criminals."

As the pope took a great interest in this case, he sat up all night over it, studying it with Cardinal di San Marcello, a man of much acumen and great experience in criminal cases. Then, having summed it up, he sent a draft of his opinion to the advocates, who read it with great satisfaction, and entertained hopes that the lives of the convicted persons would be spared; for the evidence all went to prove that even if the children had taken their father's life, all the provocation came from him, and that Beatrice in particular had been dragged into the part she had taken in this crime by the tyranny, wickedness, and brutality of her father. Under the influence of these considerations the pope mitigated the severity of their prison life, and even allowed the prisoners to hope that their lives would not be forfeited.

Amidst the general feeling of relief afforded to the public by these favours, another tragical event changed the papal mind and frustrated all his humane intentions. This was the atrocious murder of the Marchese di Santa Croce, a man seventy years of age, by his son Paolo, who stabbed him

with a dagger in fifteen or twenty places, because the father would not promise to make Paolo his sole heir. The murderer fled and escaped.

Clement VIII was horror-stricken at the increasing frequency of this crime of parricide: for the moment, however, he was unable to take action, having to go to Monte Cavallo to consecrate a cardinal titular bishop in the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli; but the day following, on Friday the 10th of September 1599, at eight o'clock in the morning, he summoned Monsignor Taverna, governor of Rome, and said to him—

"Monsignor, we place in your hands the Cenci case, that you may carry out the sentence as speedily as possible."

On his return to his palace, after leaving His Holiness, the governor convened a meeting of all the criminal judges in the city, the result of the council being that all the Cenci were condemned to death.

The final sentence was immediately known; and as this unhappy family inspired a constantly increasing interest, many cardinals spent the whole of the night either on horseback or in their carriages, making interest that, at least so far as the women were concerned, they should be put to death privately and in the prison, and that a free pardon should be granted to Bernardo, a poor lad only

fifteen years of age, who, guiltless of any participation in the crime, yet found himself involved in its consequences. The one who interested himself most in the case was Cardinal Sforza, who nevertheless failed to elicit a single gleam of hope, so obdurate was His Holiness. At length Farinacci, working on the papal conscience, succeeded, after long and urgent entreaties, and only at the last moment, that the life of Bernardo should be spared.

From Friday evening the members of the brotherhood of the Conforteria had gathered at the two prisons of Corte Savella and Tordinona. The preparations for the closing scene of the tragedy had occupied workmen on the bridge of Sant' Angelo all night; and it was not till five o'clock in the morning that the registrar entered the cell of Lucrezia and Beatrice to read their sentences to them.

Both were sleeping, calm in the belief of a reprieve. The registrar woke them, and told them that, judged by man, they must now prepare to appear before God.

Beatrice was at first thunderstruck: she seemed paralysed and speechless; then she rose from bed, and staggering as if intoxicated, recovered her speech, uttering despairing cries. Lucrezia heard the tidings with more firmness, and proceeded to dress herself to go to the chapel, exhorting Beatrice

to resignation; but she, raving, wrung her hands and struck her head against the wall, shrieking, "To die! to die! Am I to die unprepared, on a scaffold! on a gibbet! My God! my God!" This fit led to a terrible paroxysm, after which the exhaustion of her body enabled her mind to recover its balance, and from that moment she became an angel of humility and an example of resignation.

Her first request was for a notary to make her will. This was immediately complied with, and on his arrival she dictated its provisions with much calmness and precision. Its last clause desired her interment in the church of San Pietro in Montorio, for which she always had a strong attachment, as it commanded a view of her father's palace. She bequeathed five hundred crowns to the nuns of the order of the Stigmata, and ordered that her dowry, amounting to fifteen thousand crowns, should be distributed in marriage portions to fifty poor girls. She selected the foot of the high altar as the place where she wished to be buried, over which hung the beautiful picture of the Transfiguration, so often admired by her during her life.

Following her example, Lucrezia in her turn disposed of her property: she desired to be buried in the church of San Giorgio di Velobre, and left thirty-two thousand crowns to charities, with other pious legacies. Having settled their earthly affairs,

they joined in prayer, reciting psalms, litanies, and prayers for the dying.

At eight o'clock they confessed, heard mass, and received the sacraments; after which Beatrice, observing to her stepmother that the rich dresses they wore were out of place on a scaffold, ordered two to be made in nun's fashion—that is to say, gathered at the neck, with long wide sleeves. That for Lucrezia was made of black cotton stuff, Beatrice's of taffetas. In addition she had a small black turban made to place on her head. These dresses, with cords for girdles, were brought them; they were placed on a chair, while the women continued to pray.

The time appointed being near at hand, they were informed that their last moment was approaching. Then Beatrice, who was still on her knees, rose with a tranquil and almost joyful countenance. "Mother," said she, "the moment of our suffering is impending; I think we had better dress in these clothes, and help one another at our toilet for the last time." They then put on the dresses provided, girt themselves with the cords; Beatrice placed her turban on her head, and they awaited the last summons.

In the meantime, Giacomo and Bernardo, whose sentences had been read to them, awaited also the moment of their death. About ten o'clock the mem-

bers of the Confraternity of Mercy, a Florentine order, arrived at the prison of Tordinona, and halted on the threshold with the crucifix, awaiting the appearance of the unhappy youths. Here a serious accident had nearly happened. As many persons were at the prison windows to see the prisoners come out, someone accidentally threw down a large flower-pot full of earth, which fell into the street and narrowly missed one of the Confraternity who was amongst the torch-bearers just before the crucifix. It passed so close to the torch as to extinguish the flame in its descent.

At this moment the gates opened, and Giacomo appeared first on the threshold. He fell on his knees, adoring the holy crucifix with great devotion. He was completely covered with a large mourning cloak, under which his bare breast was prepared to be torn by the red-hot pincers of the executioner, which were lying ready in a chafing-dish fixed to the cart. Having ascended the vehicle, in which the executioner placed him so as more readily to perform this office, Bernardo came out, and was thus addressed on his appearance by the fiscal of Rome:—

"Signor Bernardo Cenci, in the name of our blessed Redeemer, our Holy Father the Pope spares your life; with the sole condition that you accompany your relatives to the scaffold and to their

death, and never forget to pray for those with whom you were condemned to die."

At this unexpected intelligence, a loud murmur of joy spread among the crowd, and the members of the Confraternity immediately untied the small mask which covered the youth's eyes; for, owing to his tender age, it had been thought proper to conceal the scaffold from his sight.

Then the executioner, having disposed of Giacomo, came down from the cart to take Bernardo; whose pardon being formally communicated to him, he took off his handcuffs, and placed him alongside his brother, covering him up with a magnificent cloak embroidered with gold, for the neck and shoulders of the poor lad had been already bared, as a preliminary to his decapitation. People were surprised to see such a rich cloak in the possession of the executioner, but were told that it was the one given by Beatrice to Marzio to pledge him to the murder of her father, which fell to the executioner as a perquisite after the execution of the assassin. The sight of the great assemblage of people produced such an effect upon the boy that he fainted.

The procession then proceeded to the prison of Corte Savella, marching to the sound of funeral chants. At its gates the sacred crucifix halted for the women to join: they soon appeared, fell on

their knees, and worshipped the holy symbol as the others had done. The march to the scaffold was then resumed.

The two female prisoners followed the last row of penitents in single file, veiled to the waist, with the distinction that Lucrezia, as a widow, wore a black veil and high-heeled slippers of the same hue, with bows of ribbon, as was the fashion; whilst Beatrice, as a young unmarried girl, wore a silk flat cap to match her corsage, with a plush hood, which fell over her shoulders and covered her violet frock; white slippers with high heels, ornamented with gold rosettes and cherry-coloured fringe. The arms of both were untrammelled, except for a thin slack cord which left their hands free to carry a crucifix and a handkerchief.

During the night a lofty scaffold had been erected on the bridge of Sant' Angelo, and the plank and block were placed thereon. Above the block was hung, from a large cross beam, a ponderous axe, which, guided by two grooves, fell with its whole weight at the touch of a spring.

In this formation the procession wended its way towards the bridge of Sant' Angelo. Lucrezia, the more broken down of the two, wept bitterly; but Beatrice was firm and unmoved. On arriving at the open space before the bridge, the women were led into a chapel, where they were shortly joined

by Giacomo and Bernardo; they remained together for a few moments, when the brothers were led away to the scaffold, although one was to be executed last, and the other was pardoned. But when they had mounted the platform, Bernardo fainted a second time; and as the executioner was approaching to his assistance, some of the crowd, supposing that his object was to decapitate him, cried loudly, "He is pardoned!" The executioner reassured them by seating Bernardo near the block, Giacomo kneeling on the other side.

Then the executioner descended, entered the chapel, and reappeared leading Lucrezia, who was the first to suffer. At the foot of the scaffold he tied her hands behind her back, tore open the top of her corsage so as to uncover her shoulders, gave her the crucifix to kiss, and led her to the step ladder, which she ascended with great difficulty, on account of her extreme stoutness; then, on her reaching the platform, he removed the veil which covered her head. On this exposure of her features to the immense crowd, Lucrezia shuddered from head to foot; then, her eyes full of tears, she cried with a loud voice—

"O my God, have mercy upon me; and do you, brethren, pray for my soul!"

Having uttered these words, not knowing what was required of her, she turned to Alessandro, the

chief executioner, and asked what she was to do; he told her to bestride the plank and lie prone upon it; which she did with great trouble and timidity; but as she was unable, on account of the fullness of her bust, to lay her neck upon the block, this had to be raised by placing a billet of wood underneath it; all this time the poor woman, suffering even more from shame than from fear, was kept in suspense; at length, when she was properly adjusted, the executioner touched the spring, the knife fell, and the decapitated head, falling on the platform of the scaffold, bounded two or three times in the air, to the general horror; the executioner then seized it, showed it to the multitude, and wrapping it in black taffetas, placed it with the body on a bier at the foot of the scaffold.

Whilst arrangements were being made for the decapitation of Beatrice, several stands, full of spectators, broke down; some people were killed by this accident, and still more lamed and injured.

The machine being now rearranged and washed, the executioner returned to the chapel to take charge of Beatrice, who, on seeing the sacred crucifix, said some prayers for her soul, and on her hands being tied, cried out, "God grant that you be binding this body unto corruption, and loosing this soul unto life eternal!" She then arose, proceeded to the platform, where she devoutly kissed the stigmata; then,

leaving her slippers at the foot of the scaffold, she nimbly ascended the ladder, and instructed beforehand, promptly lay down on the plank, without exposing her naked shoulders. But her precautions to shorten the bitterness of death were of no avail, for the pope, knowing her impetuous disposition, and fearing lest she might be led into the commission of some sin between absolution and death, had given orders that the moment Beatrice was extended on the scaffold a signal gun should be fired from the castle of Sant' Angelo; which was done, to the great astonishment of everybody, including Beatrice herself, who, not expecting this explosion, raised herself almost upright; the pope meanwhile, who was praying at Monte Cavallo, gave her absolution *in articulo mortis.* About five minutes thus passed, during which the sufferer waited with her head replaced on the block; at length, when the executioner judged that the absolution had been given, he released the spring, and the axe fell.

A gruesome sight was then afforded: whilst the head bounced away on one side of the block, on the other the body rose erect, as if about to step backwards; the executioner exhibited the head, and disposed of it and the body as before. He wished to place Beatrice's body with that of her stepmother, but the brotherhood of Mercy took it out of his hands, and as one of them was attempting to lay

it on the bier, it slipped from him and fell from the scaffold to the ground below; the dress being partially torn from the body, which was so besmeared with dust and blood that much time was occupied in washing it. Poor Bernardo was so overcome by this horrible scene that he swooned away for the third time, and it was necessary to revive him with stimulants to witness the fate of his elder brother.

The turn of Giacomo at length arrived: he had witnessed the death of his stepmother and his sister, and his clothes were covered with their blood; the executioner approached him and tore off his cloak, exposing his bare breast covered with the wounds caused by the grip of red-hot pincers; in this state, and half-naked, he rose to his feet, and turning to his brother, said—

"Bernardo, if in my examination I have compromised and accused you, I have done so falsely, and although I have already disavowed this declaration, I repeat, at the moment of appearing before God, that you are innocent, and that it is a cruel abuse of justice to compel you to witness this frightful spectacle."

The executioner then made him kneel down, bound his legs to one of the beams erected on the scaffold, and having bandaged his eyes, shattered his head with a blow of his mallet; then, in the sight

of all, he hacked his body into four quarters. The official party then left, taking with them Bernardo, who, being in a state of high fever, was bled and put to bed.

The corpses of the two ladies were laid out each on its bier under the statue of St. Paul, at the foot of the bridge, with four torches of white wax, which burned till four o'clock in the afternoon; then, along with the remains of Giacomo, they were taken to the church of San Giovanni Decollato; finally, about nine in the evening, the body of Beatrice, covered with flowers, and attired in the dress worn at her execution, was carried to the church of San Pietro in Montorio, with fifty lighted torches, and followed by the brethren of the order of the Stigmata and all the Franciscan monks in Rome; there, agreeably to her wish, it was buried at the foot of the high altar.

The same evening Signora Lucrezia was interred, as she had desired to be, in the church of San Giorgio di Velobre.

All Rome may be said to have been present at this tragedy, carriages, horses, foot people, and cars crowding as it were upon one another. The day was unfortunately so hot, and the sun so scorching, that many persons fainted, others returned home stricken with fever, and some even died during the night, owing to sunstroke

from exposure during the three hours occupied by the execution.

The Tuesday following, the 14th of September, being the Feast of the Holy Cross, the brotherhood of San Marcello, by special licence of the pope, set at liberty the unhappy Bernardo Cenci, with the condition of paying within the year two thousand five hundred Roman crowns to the brotherhood of the most Holy Trinity of Pope Sixtus, as may be found to-day recorded in their archives.

. . . . . .

Having now seen the tomb, if you desire to form a more vivid impression of the principal actors in this tragedy than can be derived from a narrative, pay a visit to the Barberini Gallery, where you will see, with five other masterpieces by Guidò, the portrait of Beatrice, taken, some say the night before her execution, others during her progress to the scaffold; it is the head of a lovely girl, wearing a headdress composed of a turban with a lappet. The hair is of a rich fair chestnut hue; the dark eyes are moistened with recent tears; a perfectly formed nose surmounts an infantile mouth; unfortunately, the loss of tone in the picture since it was painted has destroyed the original fair complexion. The age of the subject may be twenty, or perhaps twenty-two years.

Near this portrait is that of Lucrezia Petroni: the small head indicates a person below the middle height; the attributes are those of a Roman matron in her pride; her high complexion, graceful contour, straight nose, black eyebrows, and expression at the same time imperious and voluptuous indicate this character to the life; a smile still seems to linger on the charming dimpled cheeks and perfect mouth mentioned by the chronicler, and her face is exquisitely framed by luxuriant curls falling from her forehead in graceful profusion.

As for Giacomo and Bernardo, as no portraits of them are in existence, we are obliged to gather an idea of their appearance from the manuscript which has enabled us to compile this sanguinary history; they are thus described by the eye-witness of the closing scene:—

Giacomo was short, well-made and strong, with black hair and beard; he appeared to be about twenty-six years of age.

Poor Bernardo was the image of his sister, so nearly resembling her, that when he mounted the scaffold his long hair and girlish face led people to suppose him to be Beatrice herself: he might be fourteen or fifteen years of age.

The peace of God be with them!

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